SHAY'S BANJO SCHOOL

BY

WILLIAM SHAY

WHITE, SMITH & Co

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Banjo School

—BY—

WILLIAM SHAY

CHICAGO,
188 & 190 State St.

WHITE, SMITH & CO.,

BOSTON,
516 Washington St.

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PREFACE.

Of late years, no Instrument has become more generally popular than the Banjo, and few are so little understood, or properly played. The object of this work is to provide the public with a system of instruction so simple and effective, that any person wishing to learn the Banjo, can understand its fundamental principles at once, and become a skilful performer in a very short time. It is wholly unlike any of the previous monotonous, and intricate publications, which are better adapted for the advanced performer, than the beginner. The long experience of the author, his success with hundreds of pupils, and the fact that some of the most eminent musicians in this country, have given the Instrument, and Shay's School of Instruction, a considerable portion of time and practice, are the most conclusive evidences of his ability, both as author and teacher.

WILLIAM SHAY.

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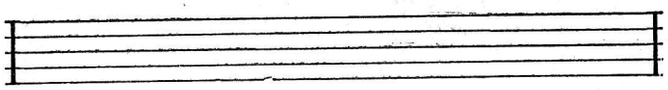
ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF MUSIC.

PART FIRST.

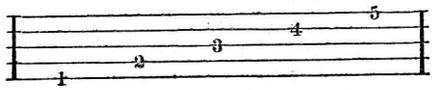
Of the Letters.

As a means of naming the different tones, it is usual to employ the first seven letters of the alphabet, viz: A, B, C, D, E, F, G. When a melody exceeds these seven tones, they are to be repeated or extended as far as may be required, in a regular composition. The whole length of the gamut or scale is sometimes needed.

The Staff.

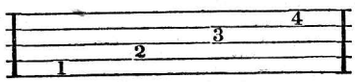


The lines of the Staff are counted lowest line is counted the first, the



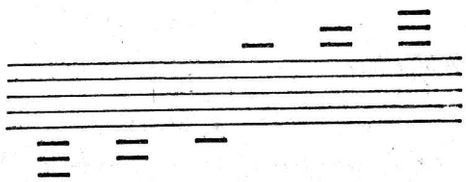
from the bottom upwards, as the highest the fifth, &c

The four spaces are counted upwards



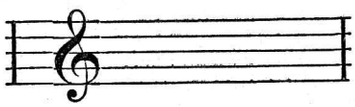
in the same manner.

Small lines, called ledger lines, are written above or below the Staff, when those of the Staff are insufficient, thus:



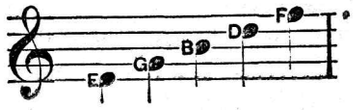
The notes, without regard to their form, are distinguished as to mere sound by their position on the staff. To establish their names it is also necessary that a sign called a Clef should be used. There are two kinds of Clefs used in modern music. The Treble or G Clef only is made use of in compositions for the Banjo, and is always placed at the beginning of the staff, thus:

Treble or G Clef:

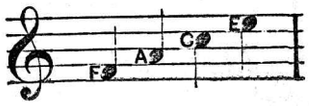


Notes written on the Lines and Spaces.

On the lines:

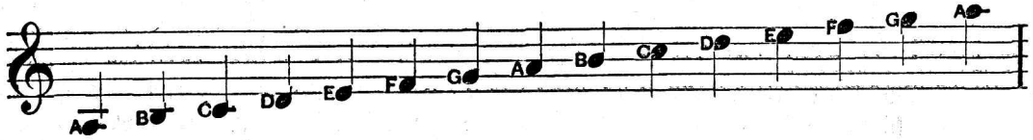


On the spaces:



Notes written on the Ledger Lines and Spaces.

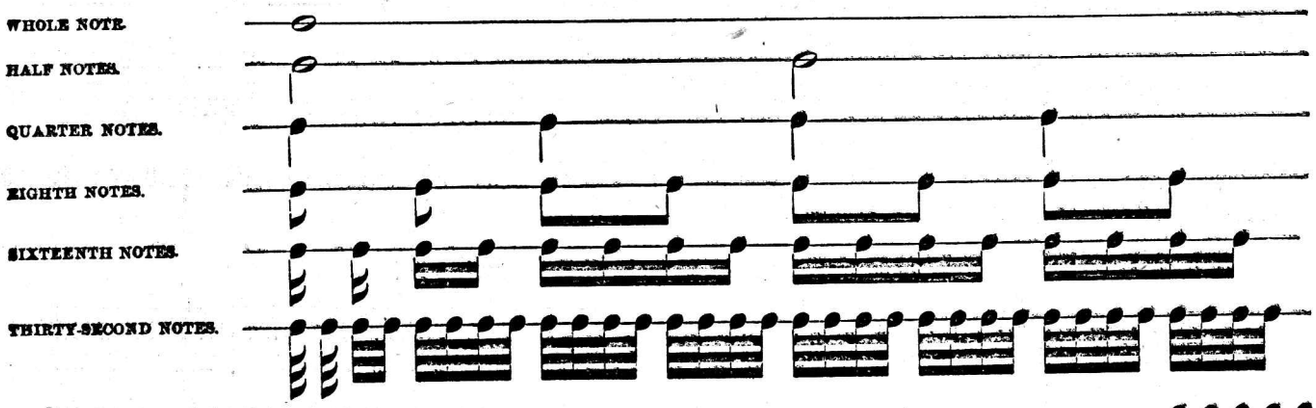
On the Lines, Spaces, and Ledger Lines through two Octaves.

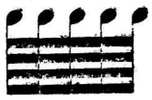


Of the Value of the Notes and Rests.

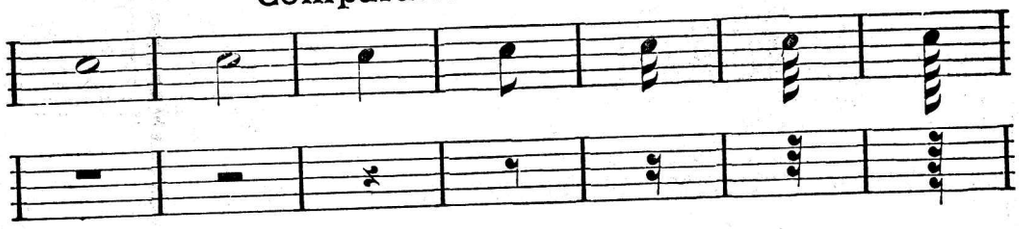
It is readily perceived, from hearing a piece of music, that it is not composed entirely from any particular combination of notes, for the mere combination would possess but little variety; but that the length of the notes, relatively greater or less, is an essential part of it. The relative duration is called the value of the notes, and is shown by the peculiar form of each note.

Comparative Table of the Relative Value of the Notes.

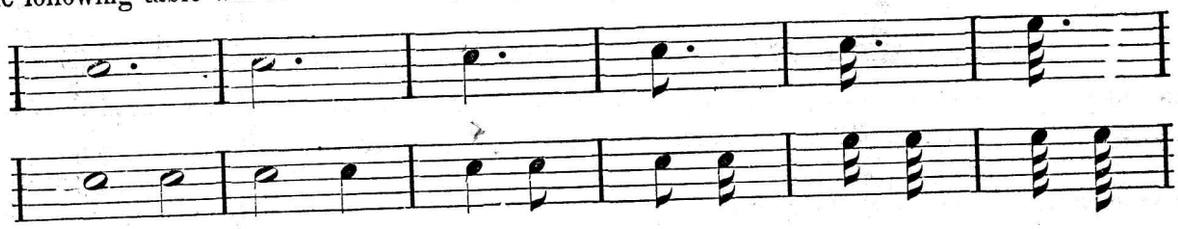


Besides the above example of notes, there are sixty-fourth notes, having four bars, thus: which are equivalent to one whole note. Then in the same ratio, one whole note is equal to two halves, or four quarter notes, or eight eighth notes, and so on downward; one half note to two quarter notes, &c.; one quarter note to two eighth notes, &c.; one eighth note to two sixteenth notes, &c.; one sixteenth note to two thirty-second notes, &c.; one thirty-second note to two sixty-fourth notes.

Of the Rests.

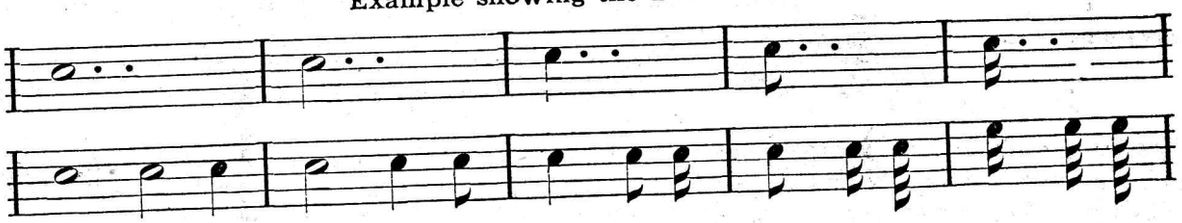
Rests, in a composition, show the music ceases to be performed during certain intervals of time. They afford repose to the singer or player, prevent confusion between phrases or members of phrases, and aid in producing musical effects. The rests have values corresponding to those of the notes, thus: the whole rest is equal to the whole note, the half rest to the half note, the quarter rest to the quarter note, the eighth rest to the eighth note, &c.

Comparative Table of Rests.

Of the Dotted and Double Dotted Notes and Rests.

The different values of the note, according to the preceding tables, are insufficient to express all musical ideas. A note wanted might be of a length relatively less than the half note, but greater than the quarter; and as there are no notes of intermediate value between the half and quarter, quarter and eighth, or between any of the other notes, the dot is used to supply their place, thus: A dot placed after a note increases its length one half of its original value; a dotted whole note is equal to three half notes, a dotted half to three quarter notes, a dotted quarter to three eighths, a dotted eighth to three sixteenths, a dotted sixteenth to three thirty-seconds, a thirty-second to three sixty-fourths.

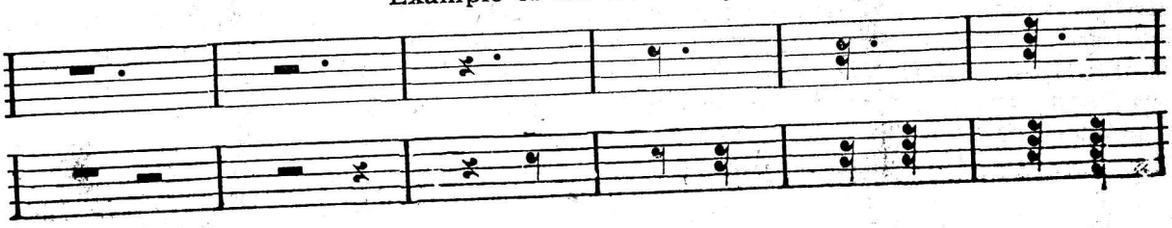
The following table will show the manner of writing the dotted notes:

When a second dot is added to the first, following a whole note, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, &c., its value is equal to half that of the first. See example.

Example showing the Double Dots.

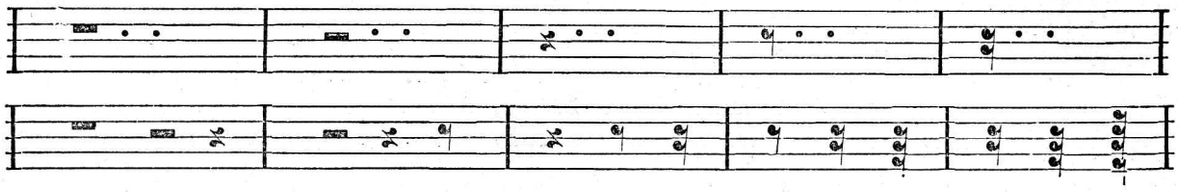


The single and double dot, which were explained in the preceding examples, are also placed after the rests, and increase their value in the same proportion. See example.

Example of the Dotted Rests.



Example of the Double Dotted Rests.

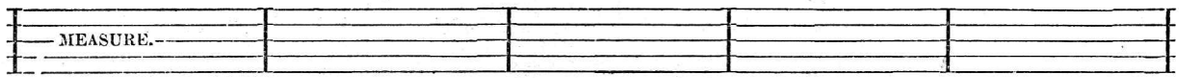


Of Time.

The Signs of the Single and Double Bars.

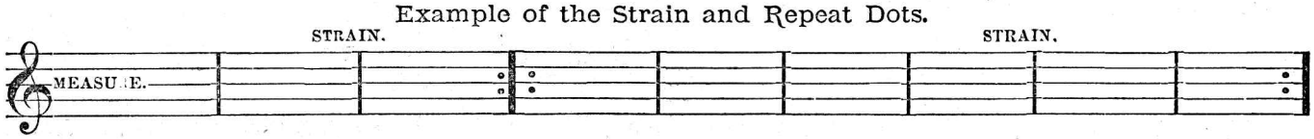
Every piece of music is divided into short and equal portions called Measures. by small bars drawn perpendicularly across the staff. The measures are themselves considered as divisible into two, three, or four parts, according to the species of time announced at the beginning of each piece.

Example of the Measure.



The main divisions in a piece of music are called Strains. They are expressed by a double bar. When dots are placed before the double bar, thus: 𝄇 they show that the division previous to it is repeated; when after, thus: 𝄆 that the division following is 𝄆 to be repeated. See example.

Example of the Strain and Repeat Dots.



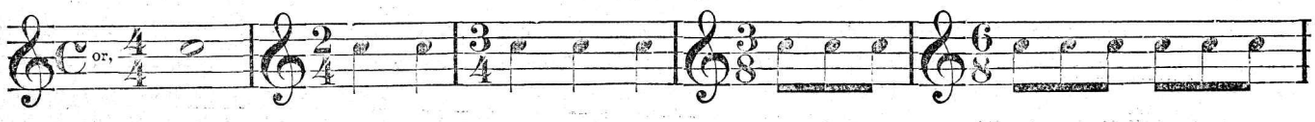
Of the Species of Time.

There are two principal kinds of time: common time, containing two or four equal parts in each measure; and triple time, containing three equal parts. Each of these times may be simple or compound.

Simple common times are indicated by 𝄵 or 4-4, containing two half or four quarter notes; and 2-4 time, containing two quarters or four eighth notes in each measure.

Simple triple times are 3-4, or three quarter notes, and 3-8, or three eighth notes in each measure.

Compound common times are 6-8, or six eighth notes.

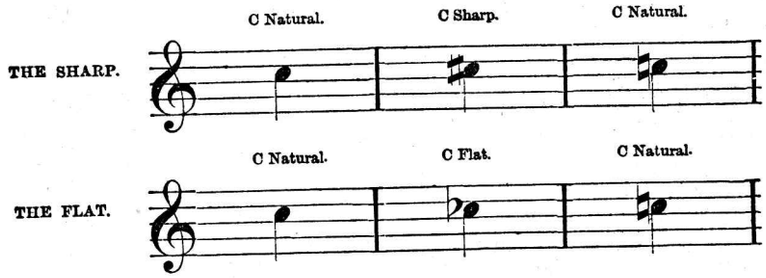
Examples of Time.

The above times are all that is necessary for a pupil to begin with. After thoroughly understanding these times the pupil can readily count any time.

Accented Notes.

Accented notes are those which are sounded louder and more distinct than others. Each variety of time has its accented counts, viz: in 4-4 time the first and third counts are accented; in 2-4 time the first count; in 3-4 time the first count; in 6-8 time the first and fourth counts.

Of the Sharp, Flat and Natural.

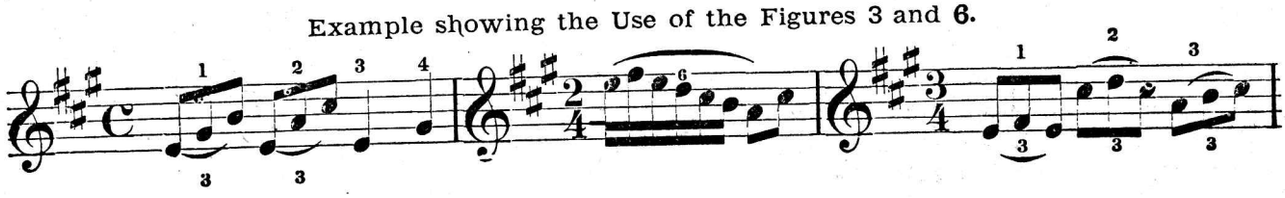
The Sharp (♯) is a sign which raises a note a semitone; the Flat (♭) lowers it a semitone; and the Natural (♮) restores a note altered by a sharp or flat to its original sound. A sharp or flat (placed next to a note), which is not in the signature, is called an accidental, and acts only in the measure in which it occurs. When these signs are placed at the commencement of a piece of music, namely: at the cleff, to point its tone, all the notes which are on the same line or space (or any line or space of the same name) on which these signs are placed, are affected by them. There are as many sharps and flats as there are letters; they, like the letter, are placed on and between the lines.

Notes affected by the Sharp, Flat and Natural.

There is also a double sharp, thus, (×,) which raises a note a whole tone; and a double flat, thus, (♭♭,) which lowers a note a whole tone.

Of the Triplet.

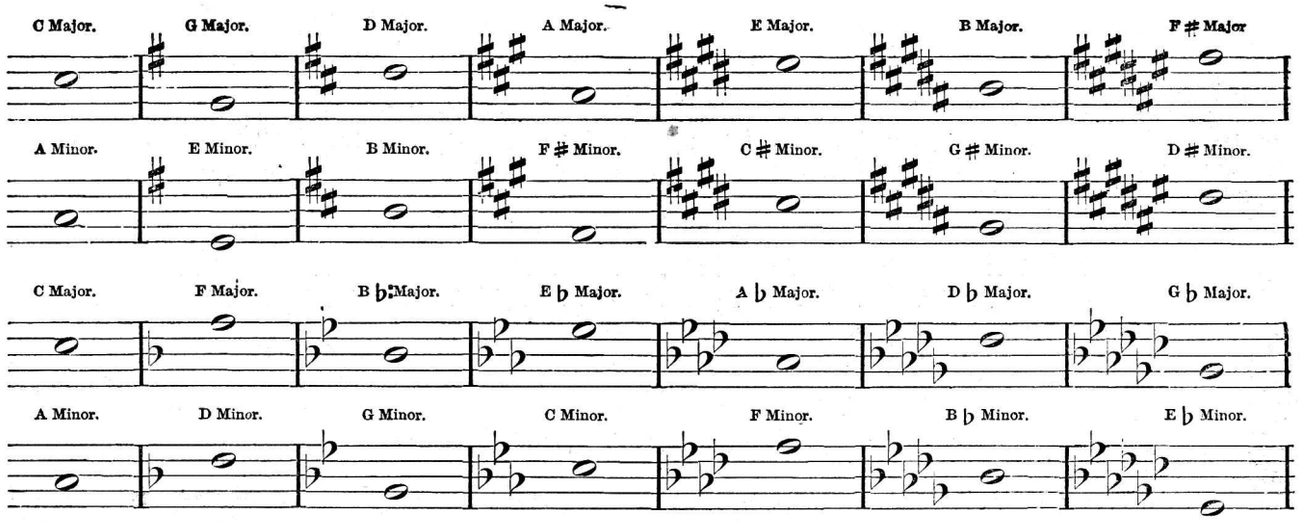
When three eighth (or any other) notes are played in the time of two, such groups are called triplets; and to render them plain, it is usual to place the figure (3) over or under the three notes taken for two; the figure (6) over or under the six notes taken for four. See example.

Example showing the Use of the Figures 3 and 6.



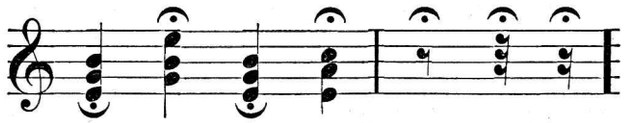
Of the Signatures or Keys.

The key of a piece of music is indicated by the number of sharps or flats which are at the clef, or signature. Each major key, which we call the principal key, has a relative minor key; it is called relative because it is marked at the signature by the same number of sharps or flats as its principal key, except the key of C major, and its relative, A minor, which have no signature. The relative minor key is a tone and a half tone below its principal key, as the following table shows:



To shorten the study of the foregoing tables, and to know in which key a piece of music is, it is necessary to know that when there are no flats or sharps at the signature, it is in C major or A minor; with the ♯, the major key is one half tone above the last sharp added to the signature, and the minor key two half tones below it; with the ♭, the major key is five half tones below the last flat added to the signature, and in the minor key four half tones above. To know whether we are in the principal key of major mode, or in its relative minor, it is necessary to examine whether the fifth of the major key is accidentally altered by a sharp or flat; if not, we are in the principal major key; if it is altered, we are in the relative minor.

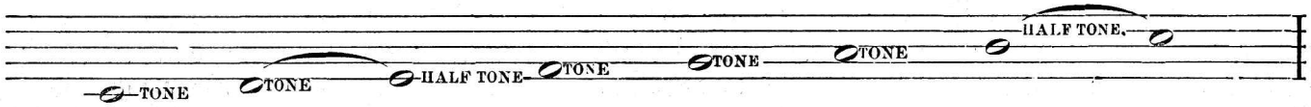
The pause (𝄐) is placed over notes and rests, and denotes that the performer may stop at pleasure.

Example.

Da Capo, or D. C., indicates that the performer must begin the piece again, and end at the first double bar, or continue to the word fine. The sign 𝄋 indicates that the performer must return to one of the same, and end at Fine.

Of the Intervals or Degrees.

The pupil will readily discover that the degrees of the scale are various. For example, the degrees from G to A, and C to D, are greater than E to F, or B to C. The first of these degrees is called a tone, and the last a half tone. See Diatonic Scale on the fingerboard, page 14.

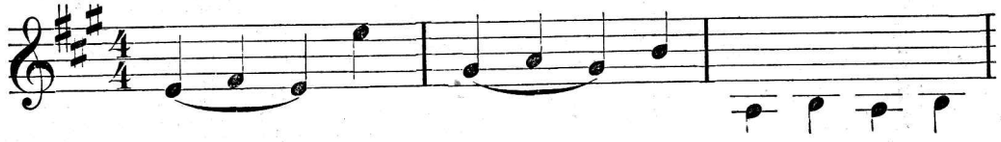
Example of Diatonic Scale.

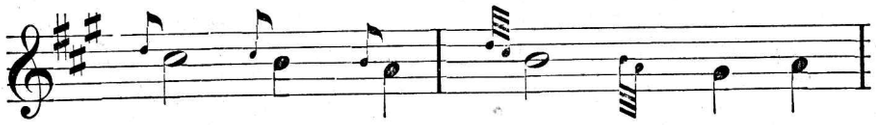


The intervals in all major scales occur as in the foregoing example, and are the same ascending or descending. They consist of five tones and two half tones, the half tones being always found between the 3d and 4th, and 7th and 8th of the scale.

Of the Slur.

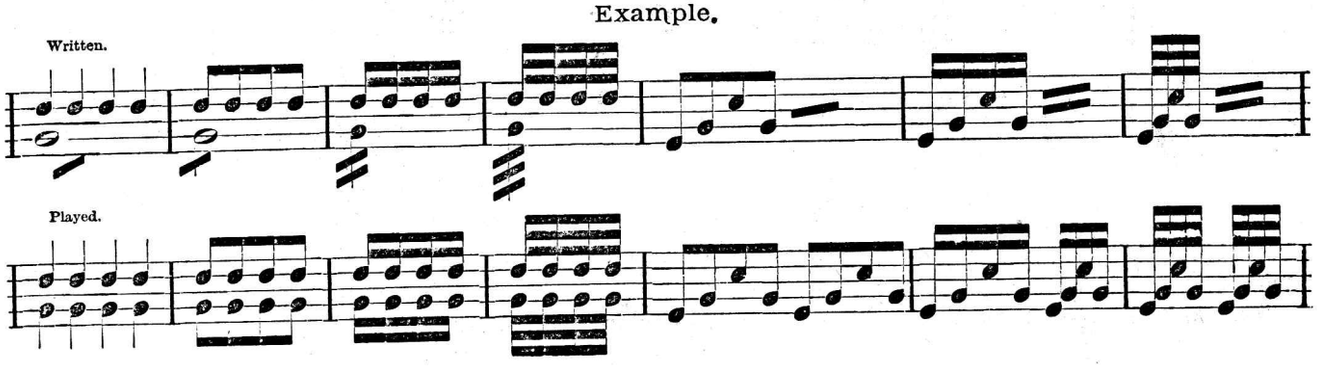
The slur is indicated by this sign ⁀ placed over or under the notes that are to be slurred. Of the notes affected, strike the first one with the right hand, and make the second with a finger of the left hand, striking down upon the string with sufficient force to cause the necessary vibration.

Example.

Grace Notes, or Appoggiaturas.

Grace Notes, or Appoggiaturas, are small notes placed before notes of the usual size, and are to be played as quick as possible, joining them to the note before which they are written. They must not affect the regular time of the measure in which they occur.

Of Abbreviations.

To abbreviate is to represent several notes by a single one, or by a single sign. This is sometimes done for want of room in the stave, and sometimes to save time and labor in the writing or copying, or to avoid repetitions of a single note or passage.

Example.



Signs indicating the Degree of Power.

Piano, or P., ... Soft.	*Mf.*, ... Half loud.
PP., ... Very soft.	*Sfz., Sf., Fz.*, ... Suddenly loud.
Dolce, or Dol., ... Sweet.	*Rfz., Rf.*, ... Gradually loud.
Forte, or F., ... Loud.	*Cres.*, ... Increase in sound.
FF., ... Very loud.	*Dim., or Decres.*, ... Diminish in sound.

BANJO SCHOOL.

PART SECOND.

The manner in which the Banjo is Strung.

The Banjo has five strings; the 1st, 2d, 3d and 5th strings are gut; the 4th string is of silk, covered with silver, and is called the bass string. For the first get a violin E string; for the second get an A violin string; for the third a D violin string; for the fourth a D guitar string. Some dealers have 4th strings made expressly for the banjo, but as the guitar strings are long enough for properly constructed banjos, they answer all purposes. For the fifth string, get a very fine E violin string.

The manner of Holding the Banjo and the Position of the Hands.

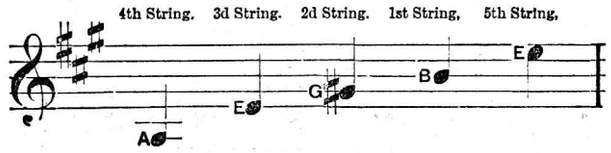
The performer should sit in an easy, natural position. The hoop, or rim of the banjo, should rest on the right thigh, close to the body, so that the wrist of the right hand will come directly over the bridge, the thumb over the fifth string, the second finger over the first string, and the first finger over the second string.

The Left Hand and Arm.

The left hand should lightly press the neck between the thumb and forefinger; the end of the thumb rest on the side next to the silver string, between the nut and first fret, and the large joint of the forefinger at the nut, (the end of the fingerboard where the strings pass over to the keys,) on the side next the first string. The arm should hang easy, graceful and natural, with the elbow separated a short distance from the body, taking care to hold the forearm and wrist curved; the fingers to be separated and held as hammers, ready to strike the strings at the first and second frets. The fingers in this position will naturally fall on the two first strings, and when required to reach the third string, the wrist should be still more curved and the thumb brought more under the neck.

The manner in which the Banjo is Tuned.

Commence tuning the short, or thumb string to E, or as near as you can get it, then place the second finger of your left hand on the first string at the fifth fret, which is E, and tune it to sound like the short string; place second finger on the second string at the third fret, and tune the second string to sound like the first string open; place second finger on third string at the fourth fret, and tune it to the second open string; place your finger on fourth or bass string at the seventh fret, and tune it to the third open string; and your banjo will be in good tune. When the banjo is in tune, the following notes are made on the open strings:



The manner of Touching the Strings.

To obtain a full and mellow tone, it is necessary to apply some force with the end of the fingers, not touching the strings with the nails, as they thereby produce a snapping, disagreeable sound. The fingers

meet the strings obliquely, so as to cause them to vibrate across the finger-board. They should press and slide along the strings in a sort of undulating or scouping manner. The fingers of the left hand should press the strings very close on the frets, by which the sound is formed and made more clear and pure.

On Fingering.

Right Hand Fingering.

As a general rule, the two first strings are mostly used by the first and second fingers, viz: the first finger is used on the second string, and the second finger on the first string; the thumb commanding the third. fourth, and fifth (or thumb string). The first and second strings are picked upwards; and the third, fourth and fifth downwards. The third finger is not used except in chords and arpeggios, which will be more fully explained in its proper place. (See arpeggios.)

Left Hand Fingering.

For the first finger, No. 1; for the second finger, No. 2; for the third finger, No. 3; for the fourth finger, No. 4; for the open strings, 0.

Of the Keys commonly used on the Banjo.

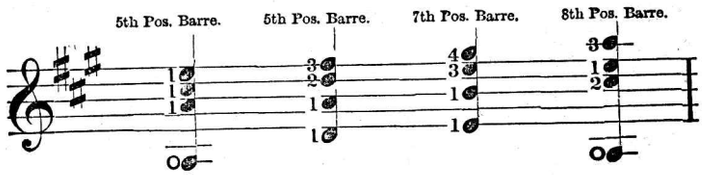
The banjo may be played in all the keys; but like all other instruments, it has some keys more favorable to it than others. Those which are most favorable are:

A, three sharps. D, two sharps. A minor, natural signature.
E, four sharps. G, one sharp. F♯ minor, three sharps.

The other keys are difficult, because they require too often the use of the barre, therefore I consider it unnecessary to introduce any other in the exercises of this work.

The Barre.

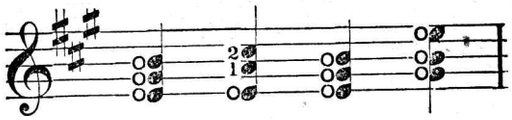
The barre is made by pressing the first finger of the left hand on two or more strings at one time, and on the same fret. To make the barre with ease, it is necessary to raise the wrist, and to place the thumb entirely behind the neck of the banjo, leaving the remaining fingers free to stop the strings when desired. See example.



Of the Chords.

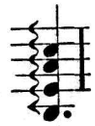
The union of two or more notes played together as one.

Example.

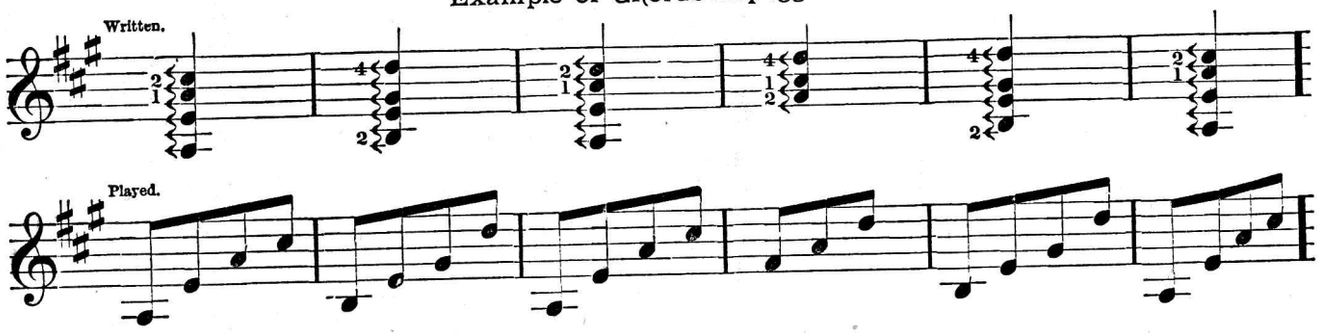


Of Arpeggios.

An arpeggio is a number of notes played successively in uniform order, and which, when united, form chords. Arpeggios are used on the banjo, because they produce an agreeable effect on the instrument;

and as studies, they give strength and agility to the fingers of the right hand. In making chords or arpeggios of four or five notes, the fingers of the right hand are to be placed one string higher, as follows: the first finger on the third string, the second finger on the second string, and the third finger on the first string, the thumb commanding the fourth and fifth (or thumb string) in practising the arpeggio. The lowest tone is to be taken first, and the highest tone the last. Whenever a chord is to be arpeggio'd, the sign, thus:  is placed before the chord.

Example of Chords Arpeggio'd



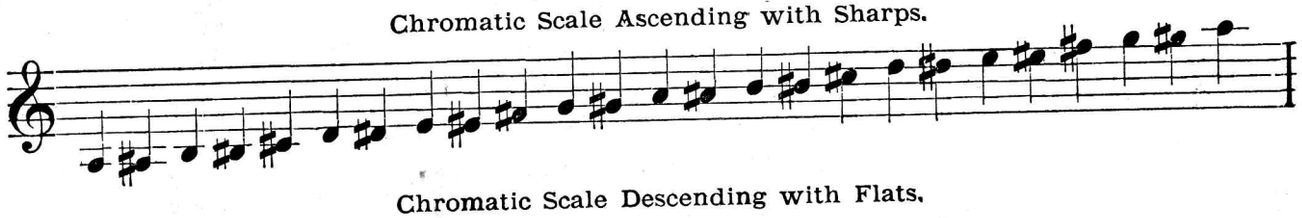
To execute the arpeggio well, before striking the strings the fingers of the left hand should be placed at once on the notes forming the chord, on which the arpeggio is to be played; and when the last note is struck, the fingers should be raised to pass to the next chord. This rule is indispensable. If the fingers were to leave each note soon as it was struck, the vibration of the entire chord would be obstructed, of which each note is an essential part. The fingers of the right hand should not touch the strings, but to make them vibrate.

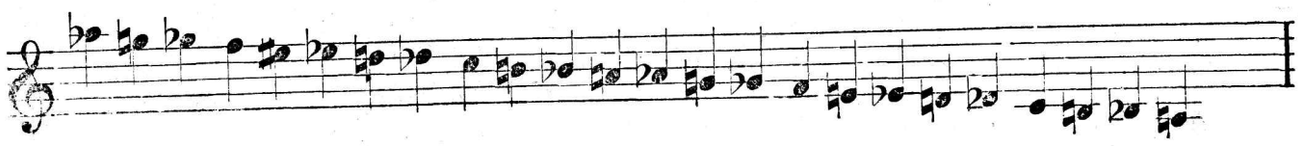
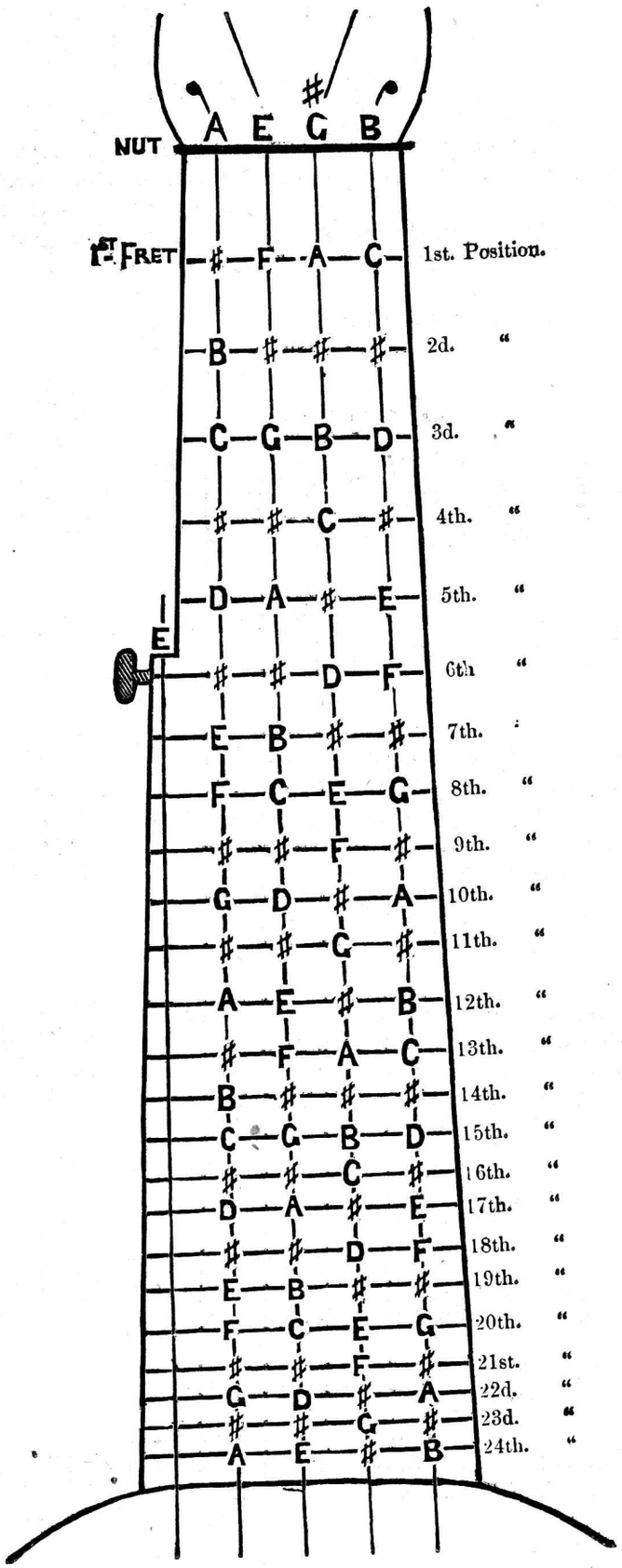
Of Harmonics.

Harmonics are produced by placing a finger of the left hand across the strings of the banjo at certain divisions of the finger-board. The finger must press lightly, yet with sufficient force to prevent the string from vibrating as if open. As soon as the string has been struck with sufficient force, the finger must be taken off. Harmonics are produced at the 4th, 5th, 7th, 12th and 18th frets.

The Chromatic Scale for the Banjo.

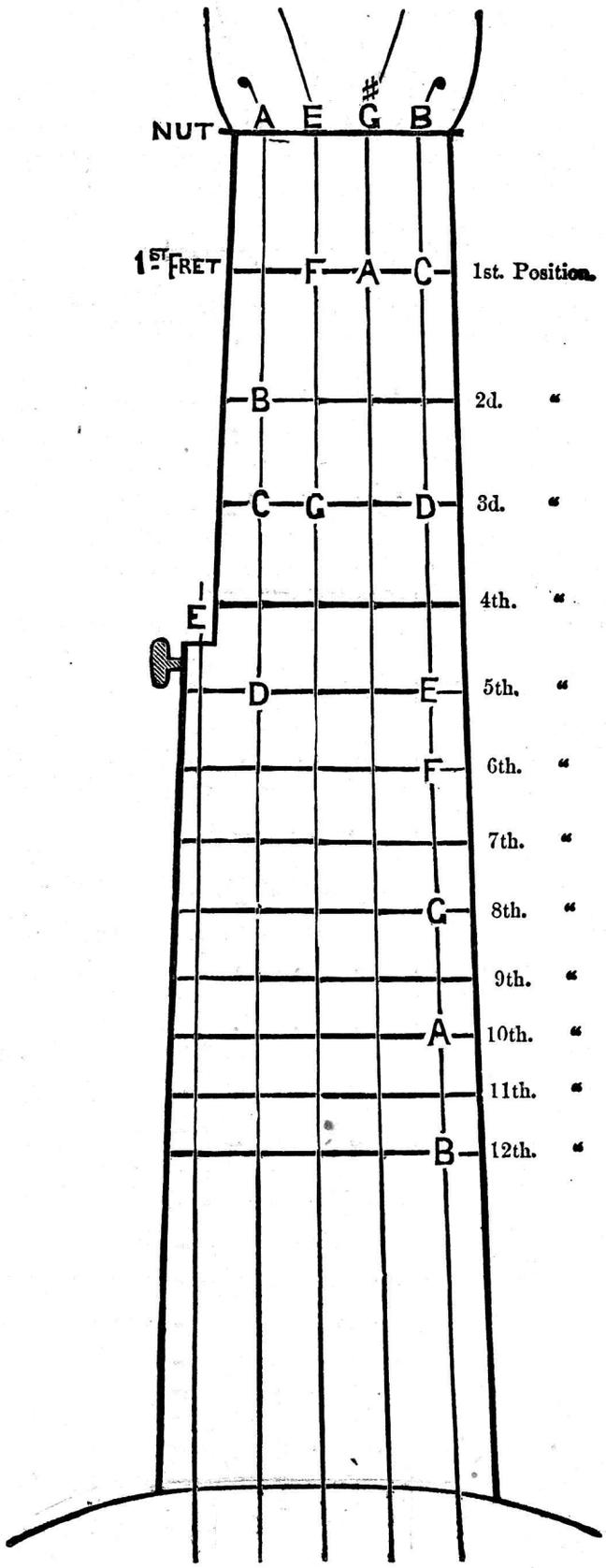
Chromatic Scale Ascending with Sharps.



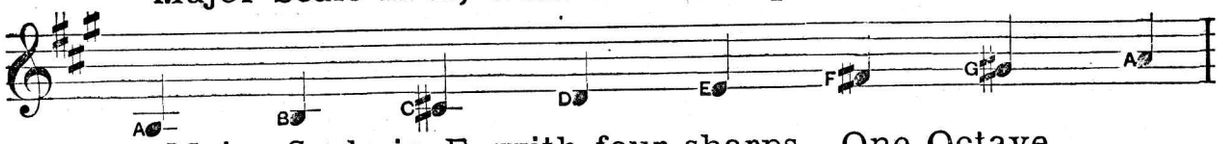
Chromatic Scale Descending with Flats.



VIEW OF THE FINGER-BOARD, SHOWING THE CHROMATIC SCALE, ASCENDING WITH SHARPS.

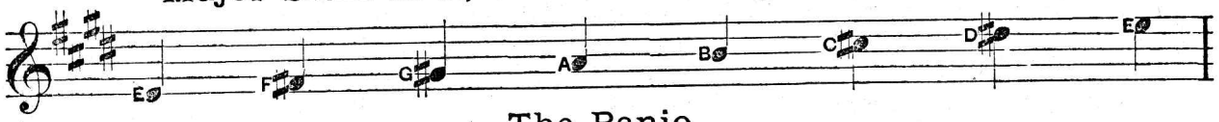
VIEW OF THE DIATONIC SCALE ON THE FINGER-BOARD.



Major Scale in A, with three sharps.—One Octave.



Major Scale in E, with four sharps.—One Octave.



The Banjo.

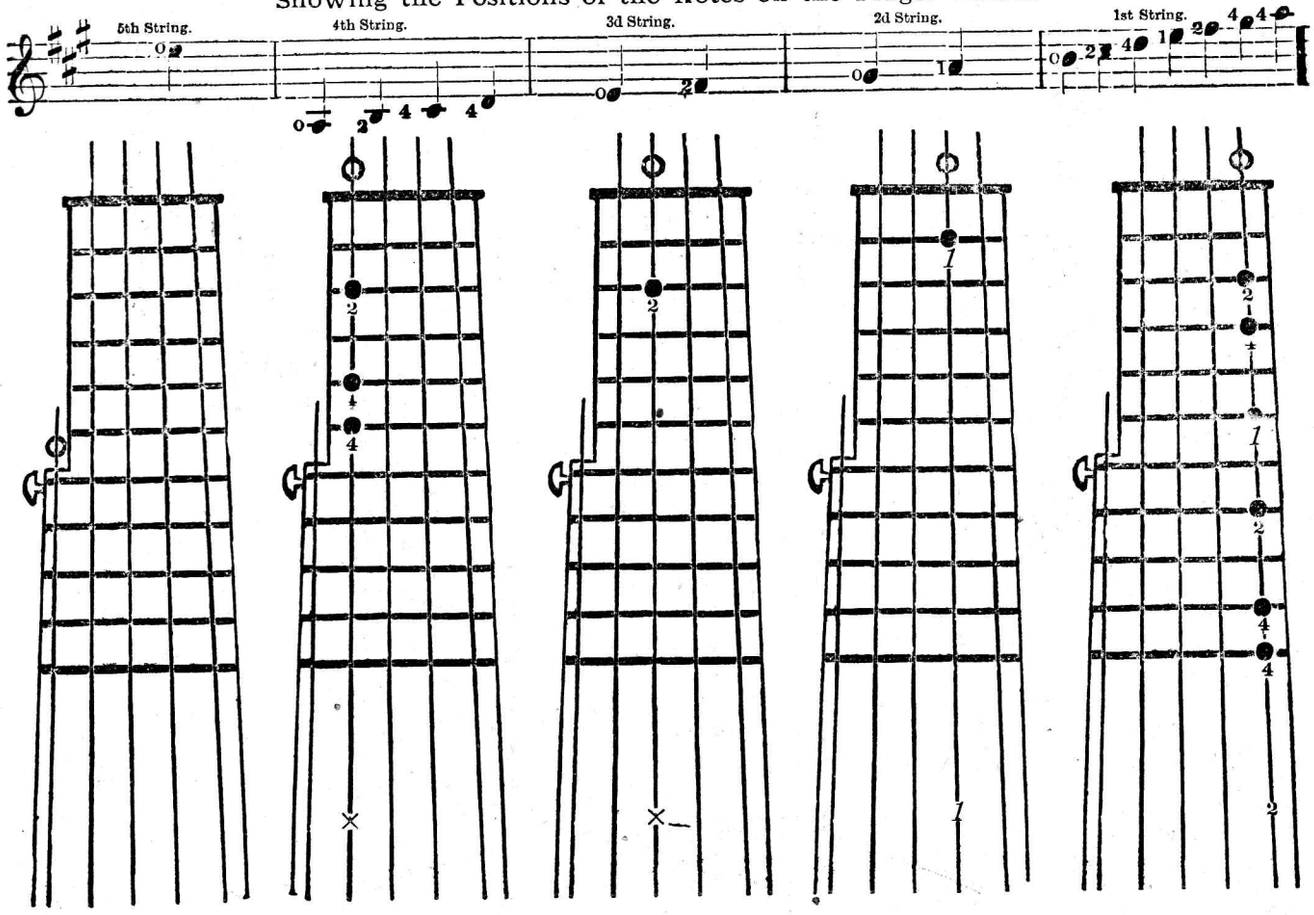
The beginner, in selecting an instrument, should select one with frets, as they point out all the principal positions on the banjo, thereby saving time and trouble for the learner. Twelve frets is usually all that is made use of in ordinary banjo music, therefore an instrument with twelve frets will answer all purposes.

How to Fret the Banjo.

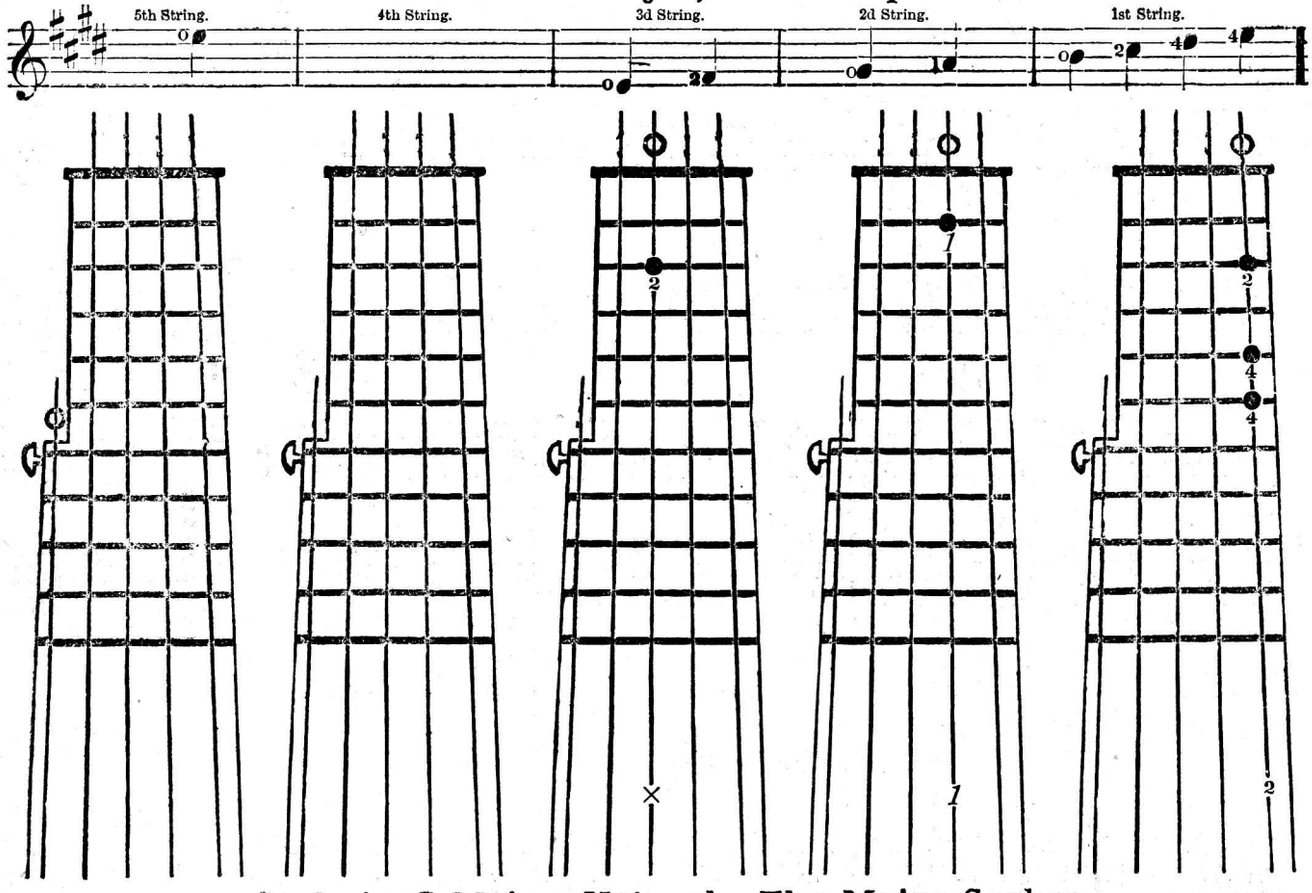
Great care must be taken in doing this. The distance between the nut and bridge must be divided intc 18 equal parts; then put on your first fret; after putting on the first fret, then again divide the space between the bridge and first fret into 18 equal parts, putting on your second fret; again divide the space between the bridge and second fret, and so on until you have as many frets as you require.

Scale in A Major, with three sharps.

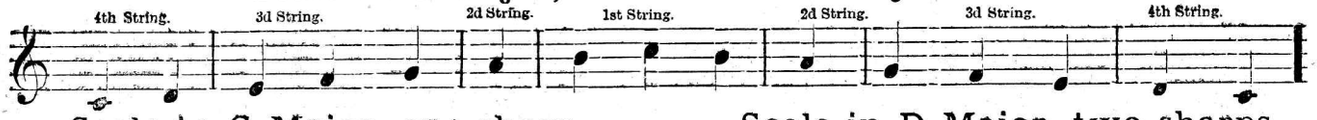
Showing the Positions of the Notes on the Finger-Board.



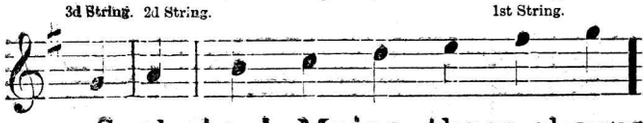
Scale in E Major, four sharps.



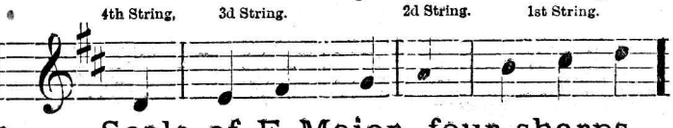
Scale in C Major, Natural.—The Major Scales.



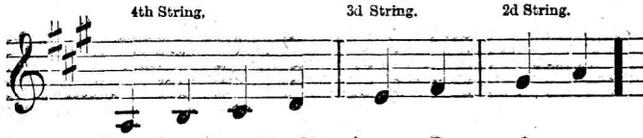
Scale in G Major, one sharp.

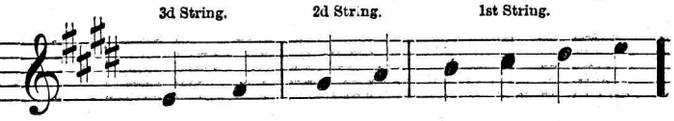
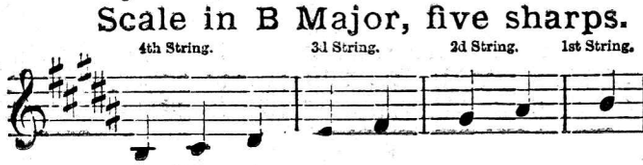
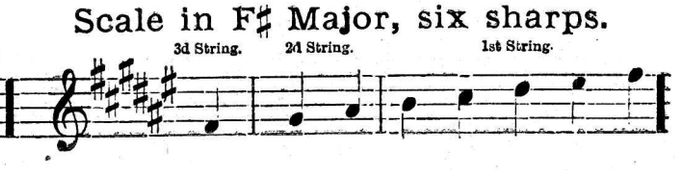
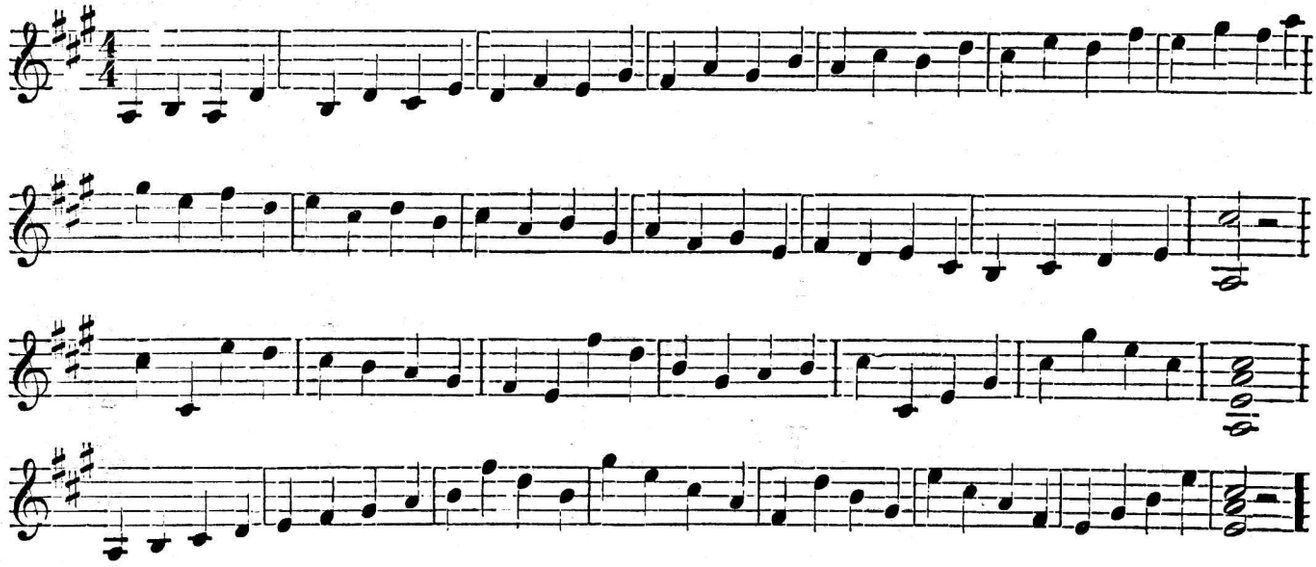
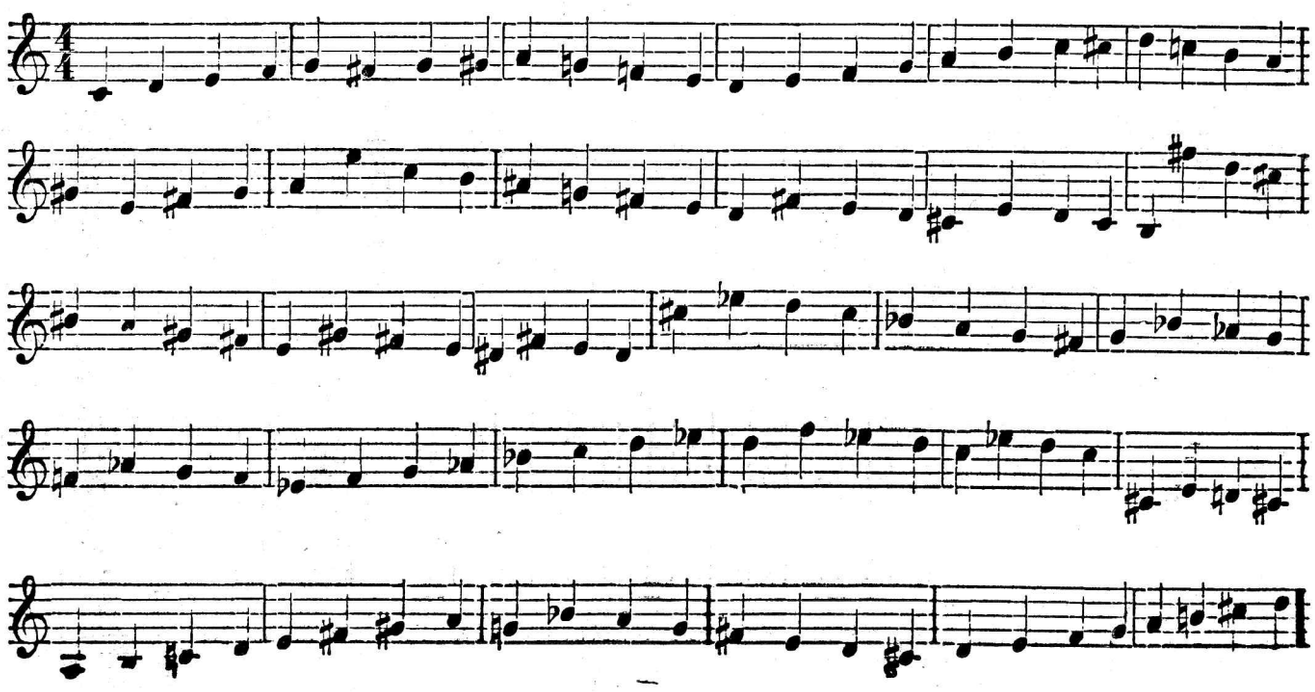


Scale in D Major, two sharps.



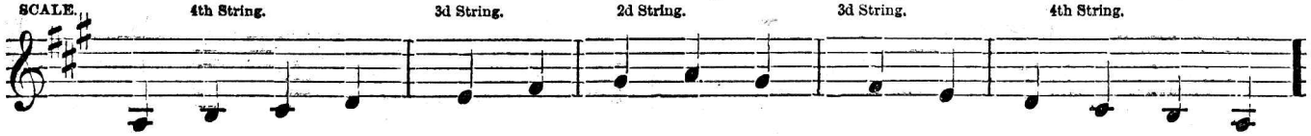
Scale in A Major, three sharps.



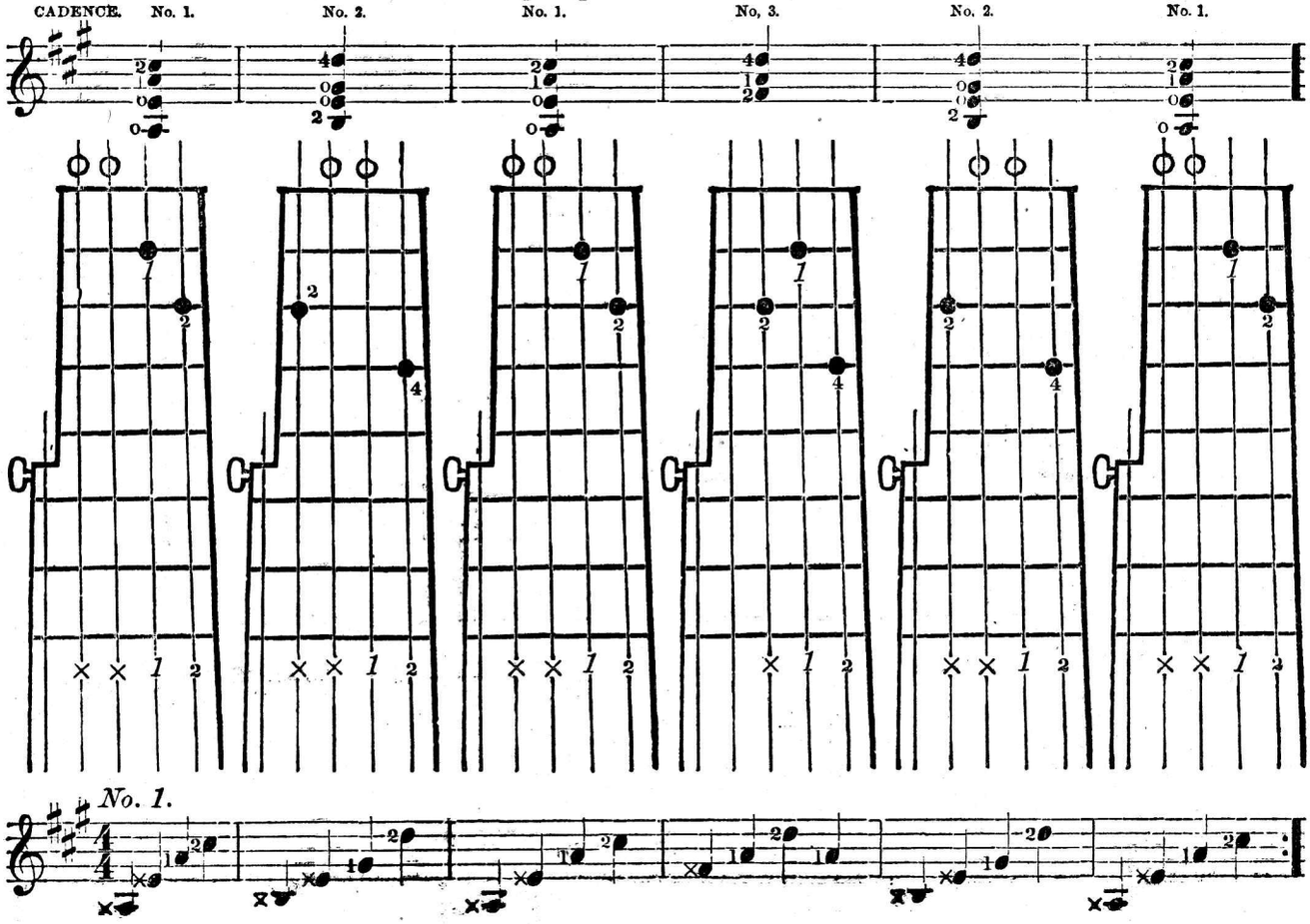
Scale of E Major, four sharps.

Scale in B Major, five sharps.

Scale in F♯ Major, six sharps.

Exercises of the Scale.

Exercises with Sharps and Flats.

PART THIRD.

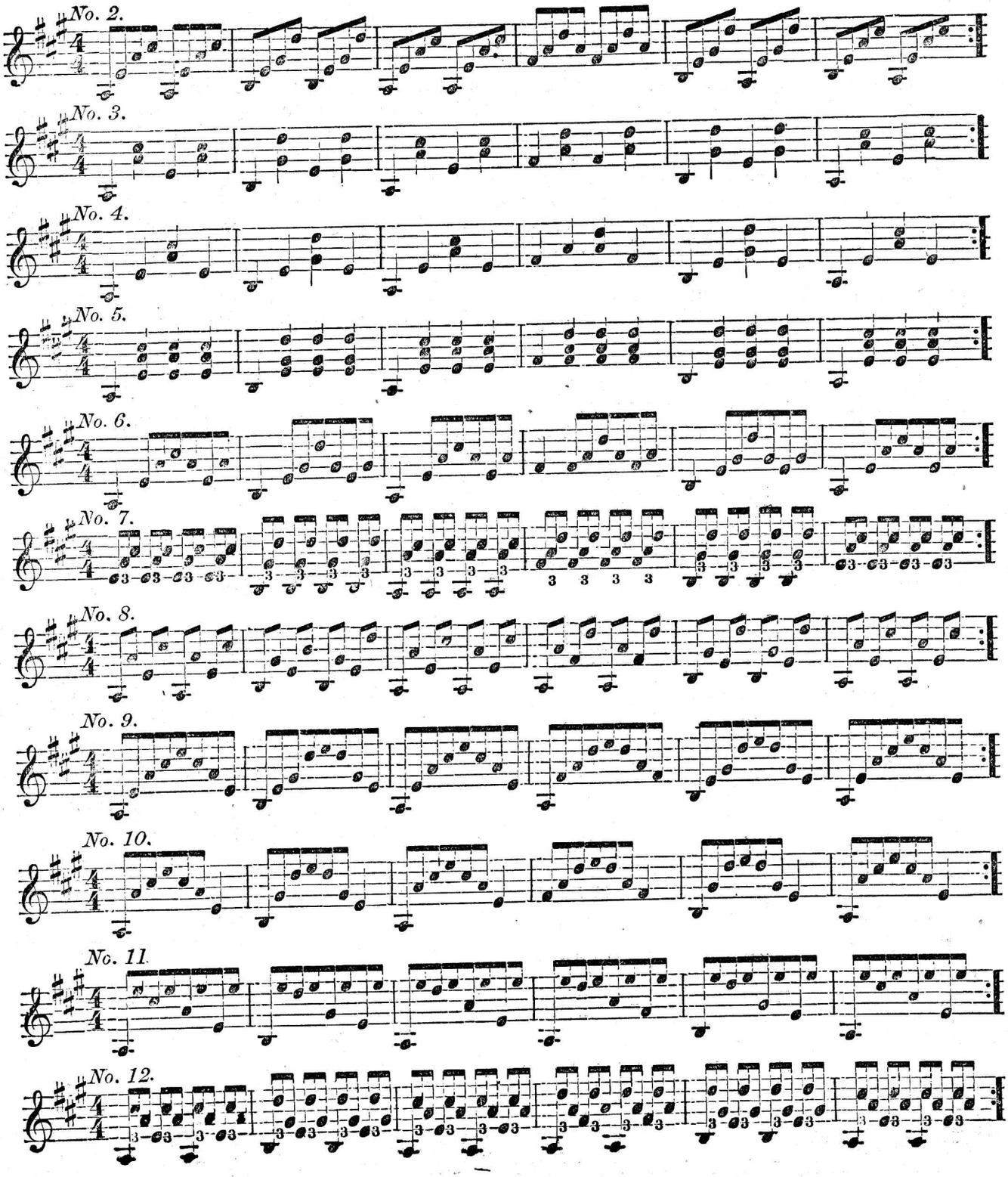
The chords in the cadences of the following diagrams show the positions of the left hand in the exercises of each individual key in this work. And to more fully explain the fingering of the right hand, I have adopted a set of figures which are placed on the lower part of the diagrams, as follows: 1, for first finger; 2, for second finger; 3, for third finger; and × for the thumb. By placing the fingers of the left hand in the position of the number one chord, the pupil will readily discover that all the movements in the first measures of the twelve exercises can be played without changing the fingers of the left hand. The second and third chords can also be played in the same manner. But in order to give the exercises the proper effect, they should be played as marked in the cadence, viz: Nos. 1, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1, thereby giving practice to the fingers of both the right and left hands. The figures placed over the chords at the head of each exercise, represent chords taken from certain degrees of the scale in each key, viz: No. 1, the tonic chord (or first letter of the scale); No. 2, dominant 7th (or 5th letter do); No. 3, sub-dominant (or 4th letter do).

Exercises in the Key of A Major.

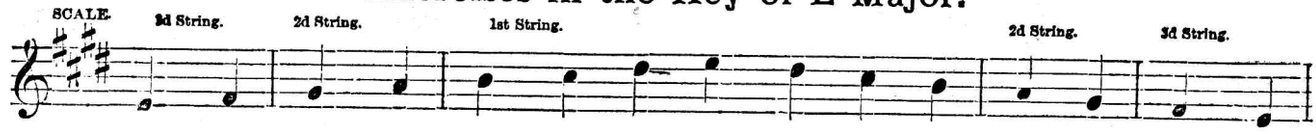


Chords belonging to the Key of A Major.

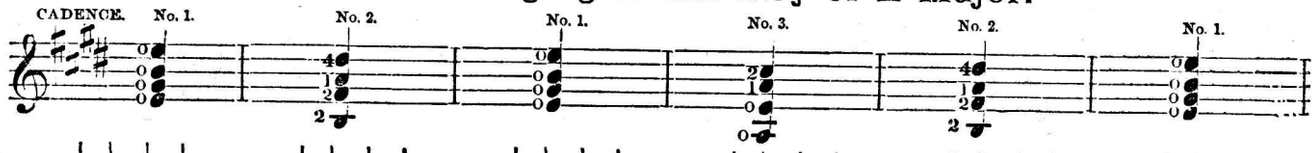


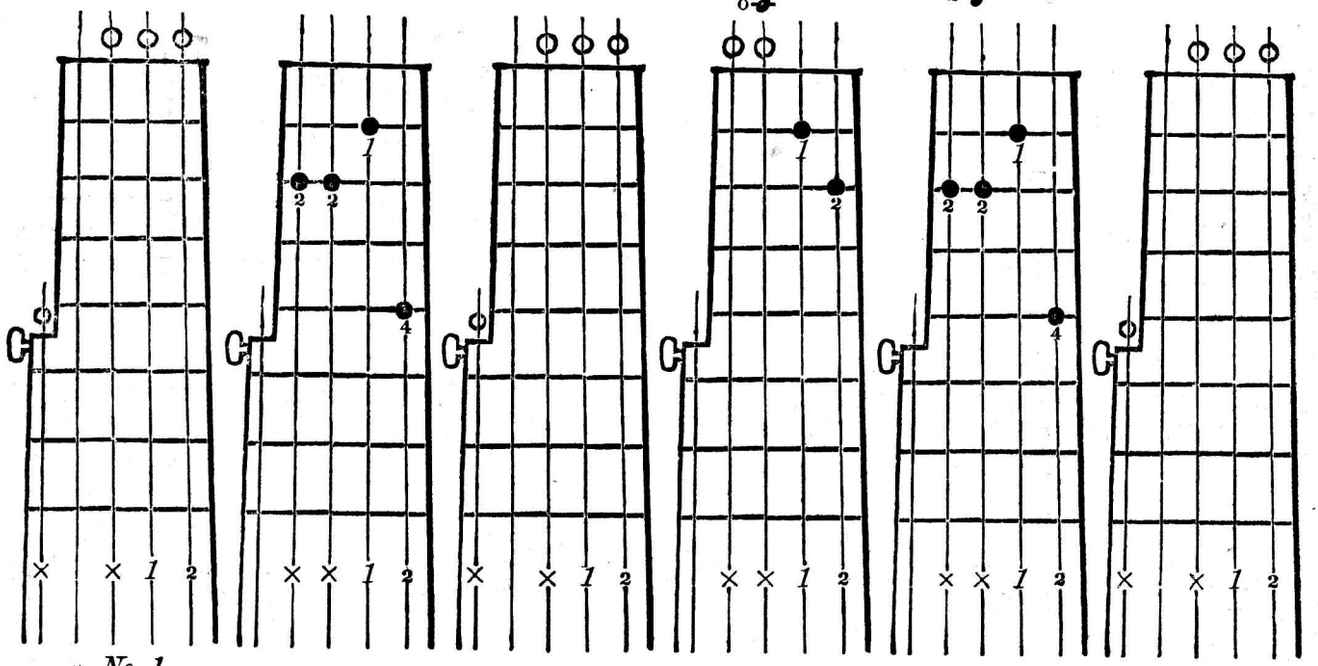
No. 1.

No. 2.
No. 3.
No. 4.
No. 5.
No. 6.
No. 7.
No. 8.
No. 9.
No. 10.
No. 11.
No. 12.

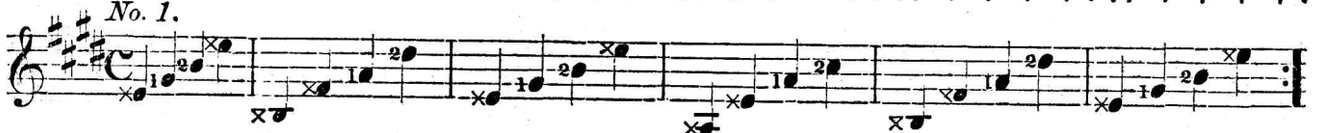
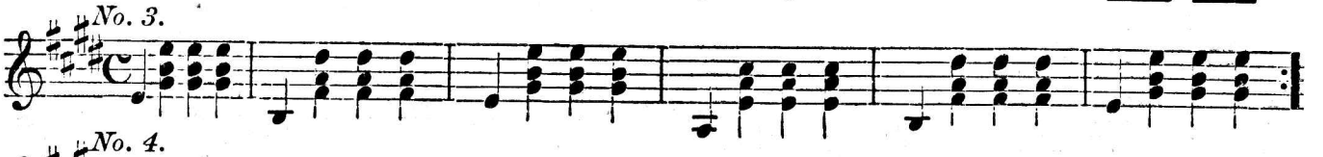
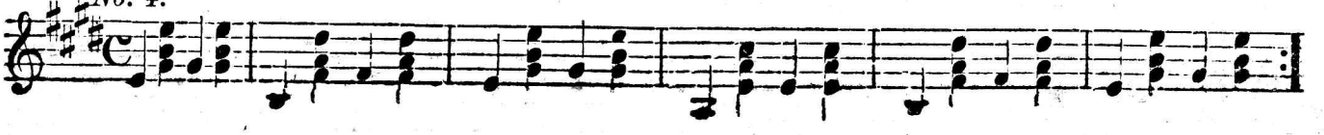
Exercises in the Key of E Major.



Chords belonging to the Key of E Major.







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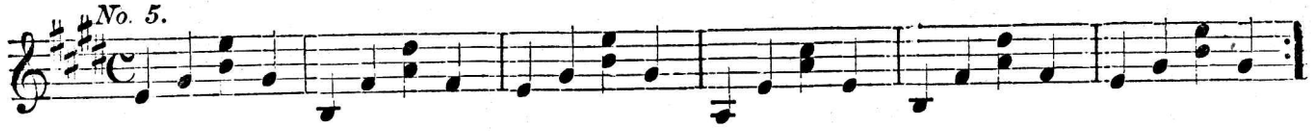
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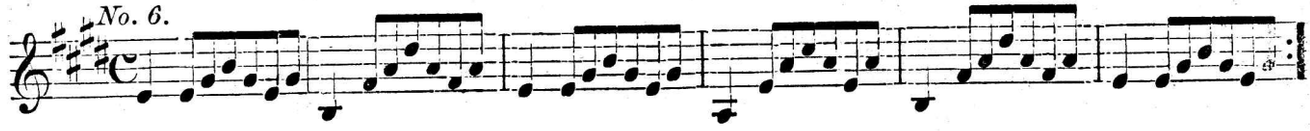
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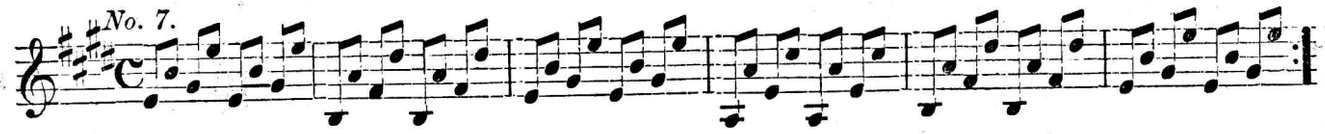
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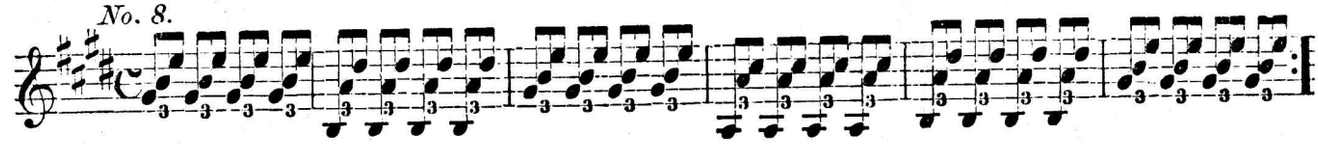
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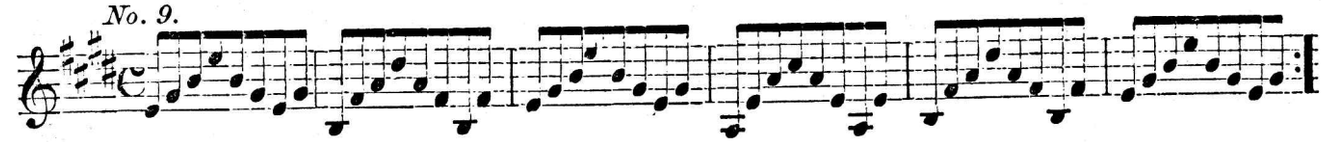
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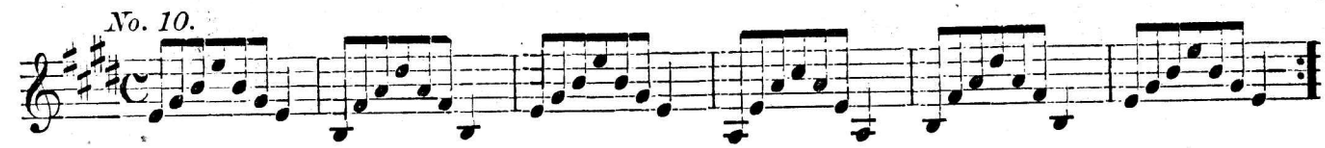
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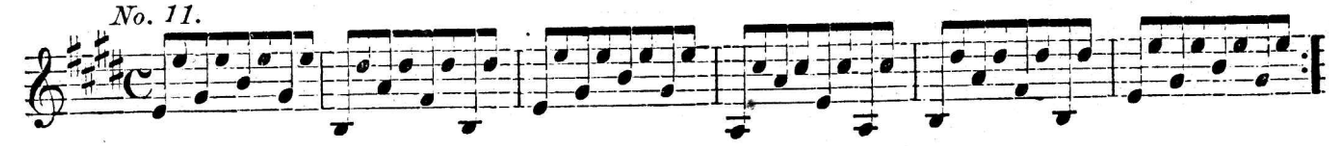
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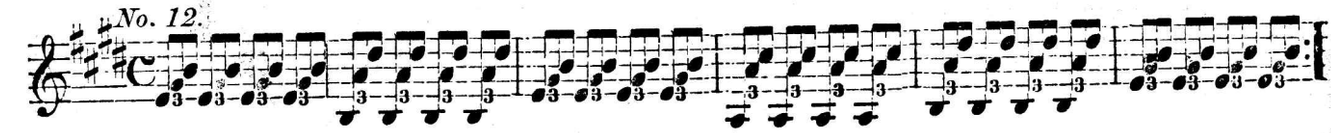
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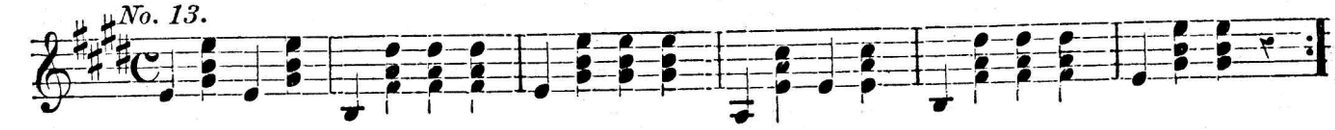
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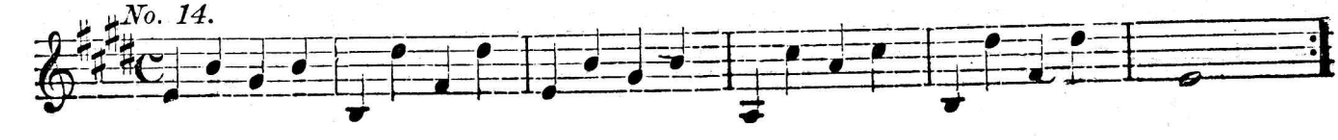
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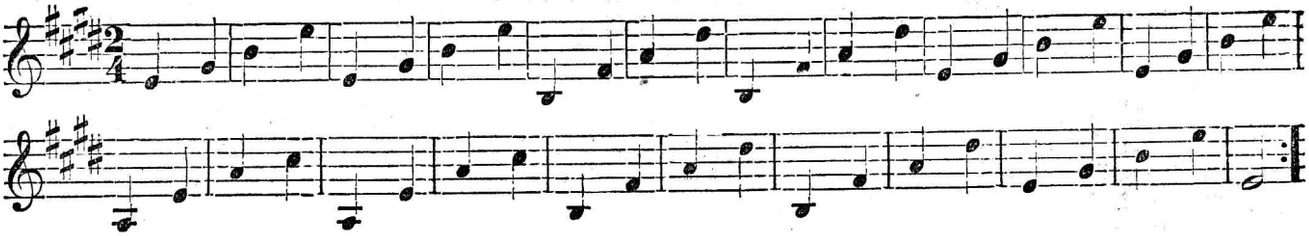
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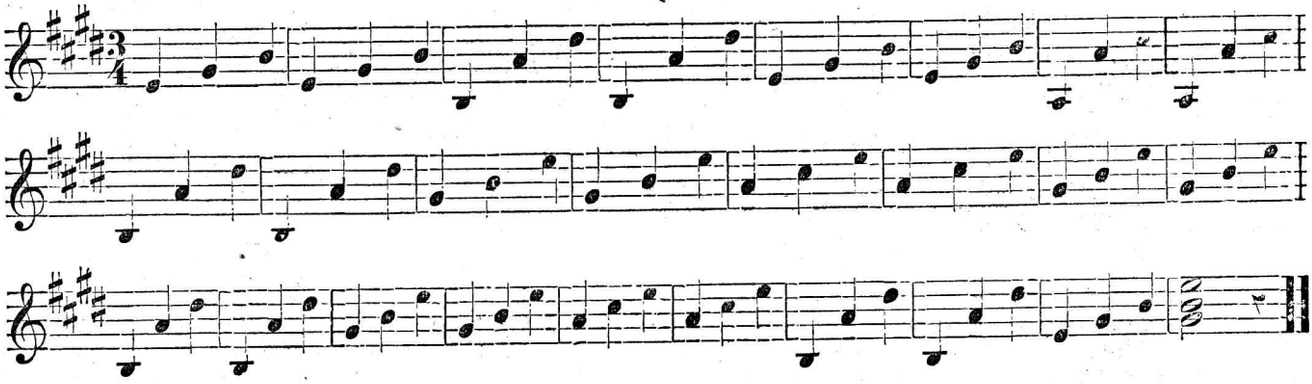
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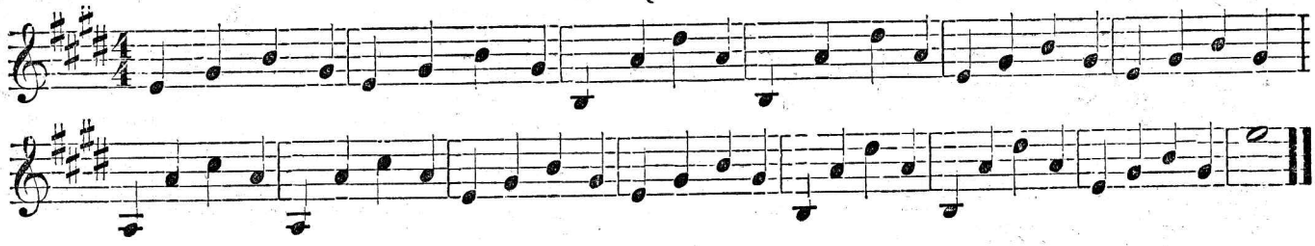
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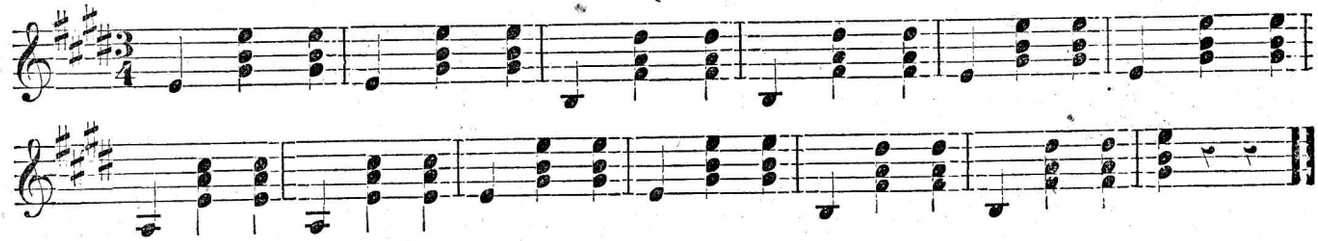
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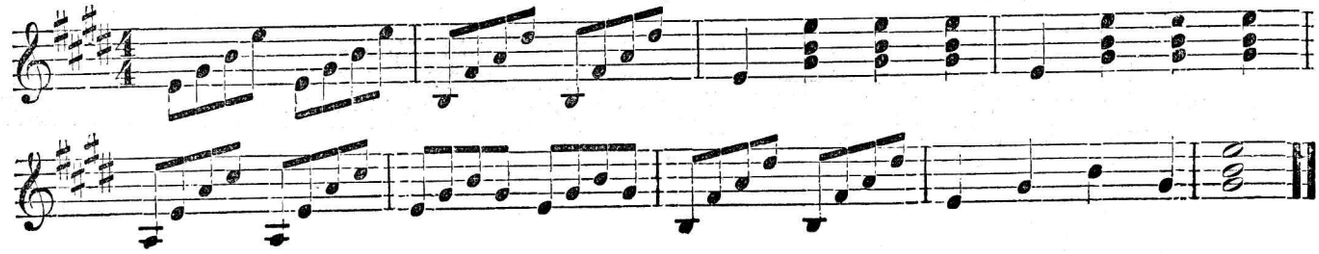
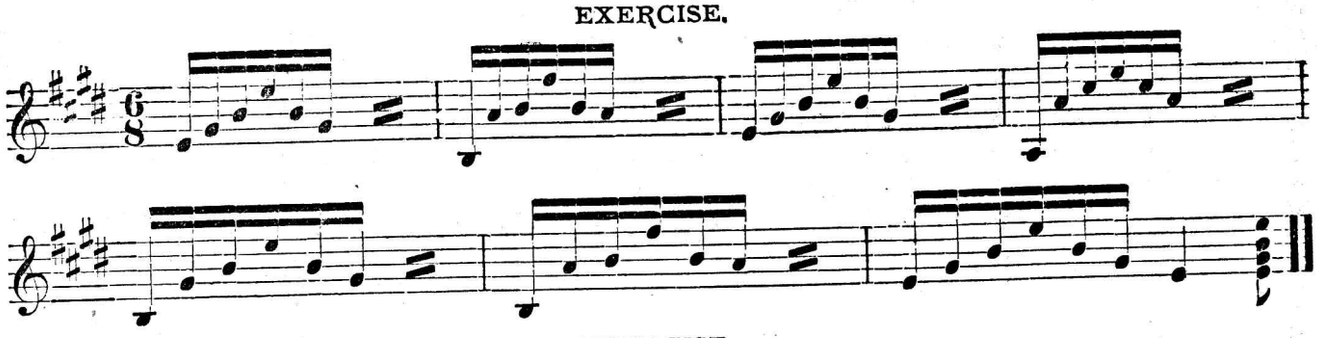

EXERCISE.



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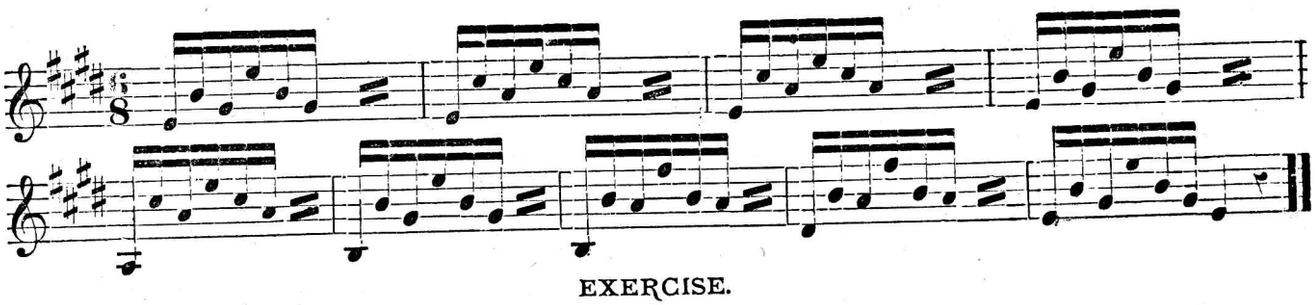
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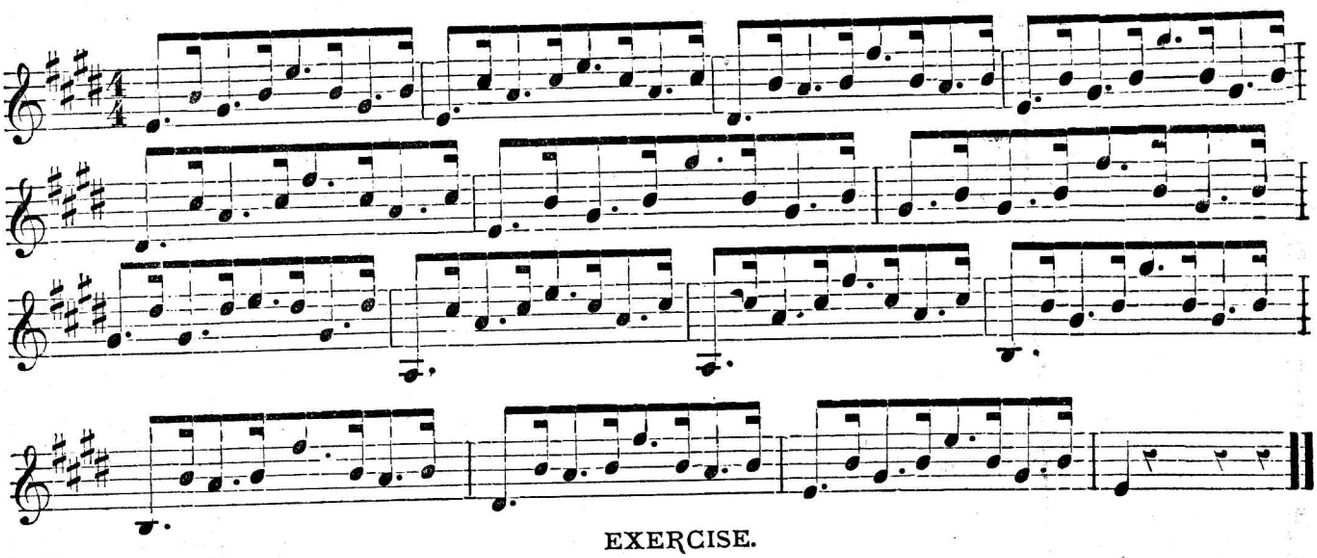

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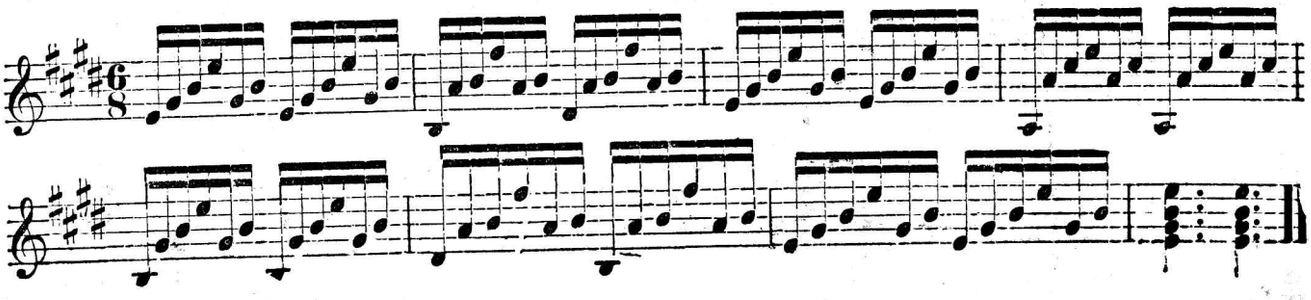
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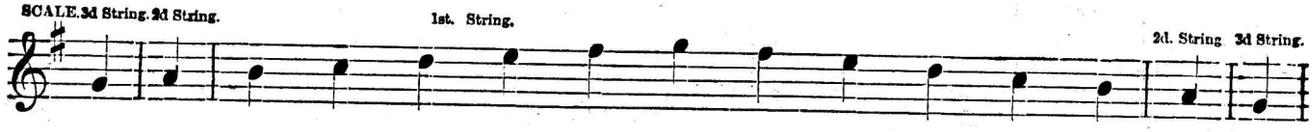
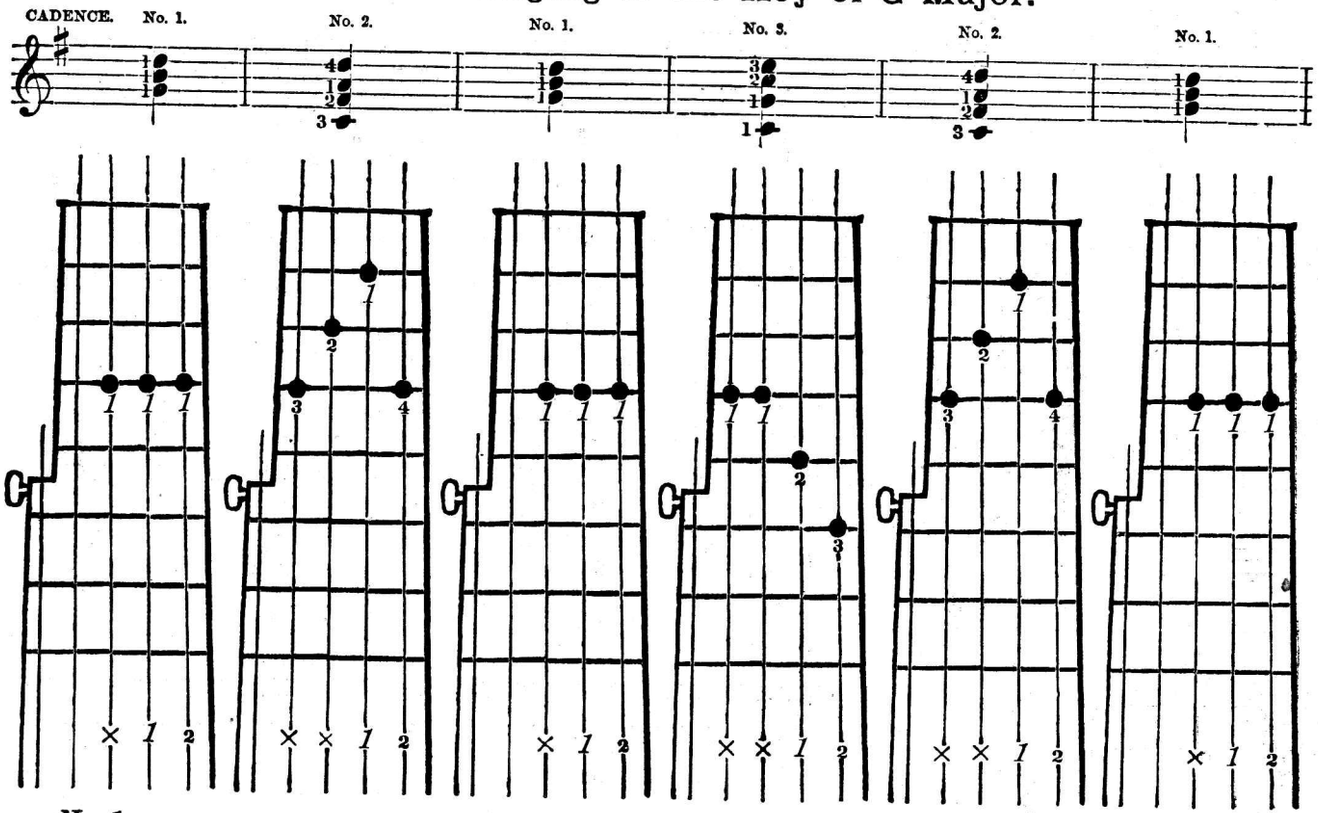
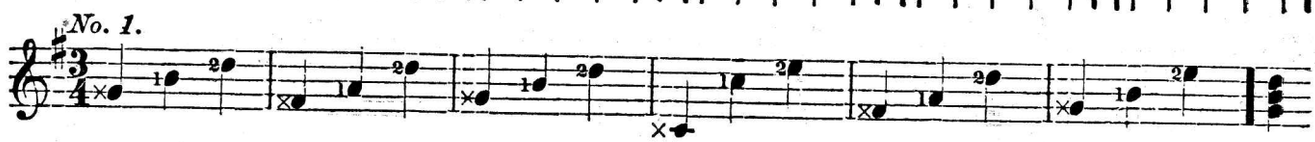
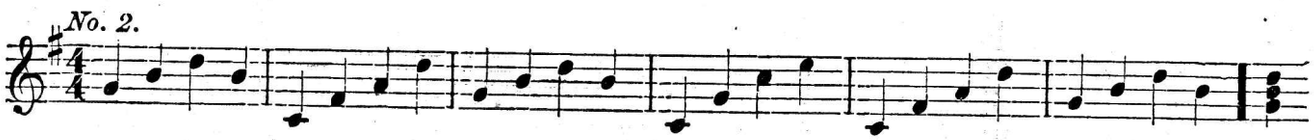
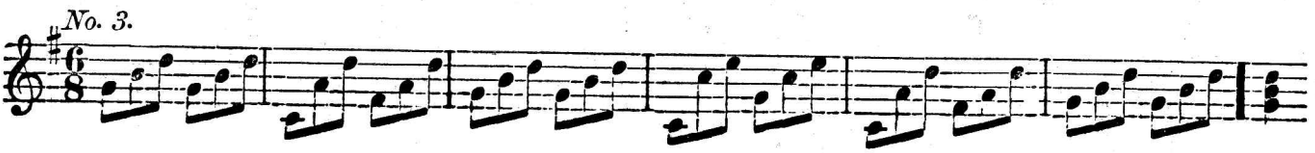


Chords belonging to the Key of G Major.





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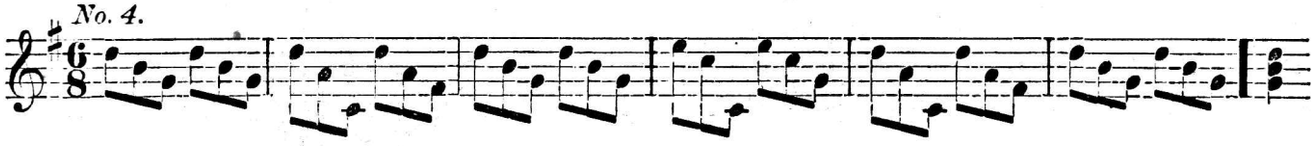
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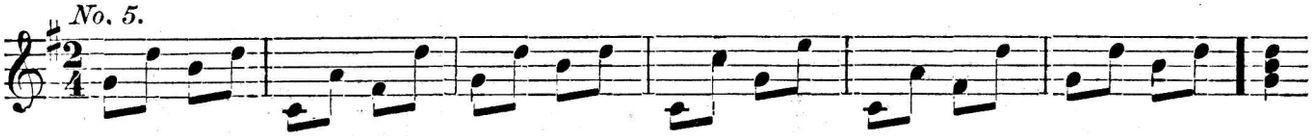
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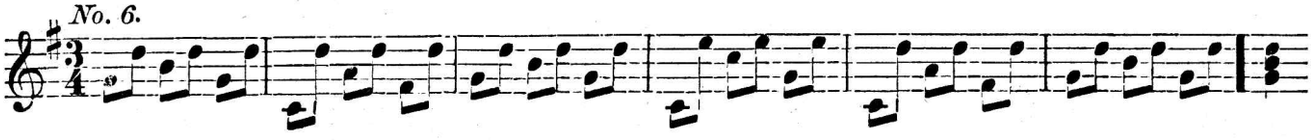
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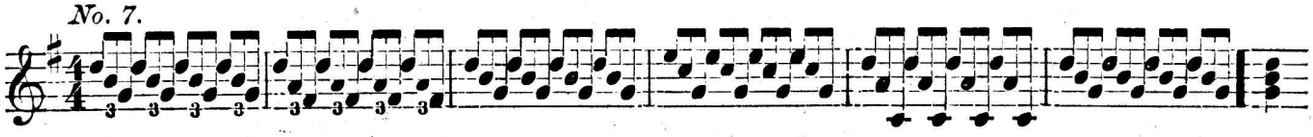
EXERCISE.

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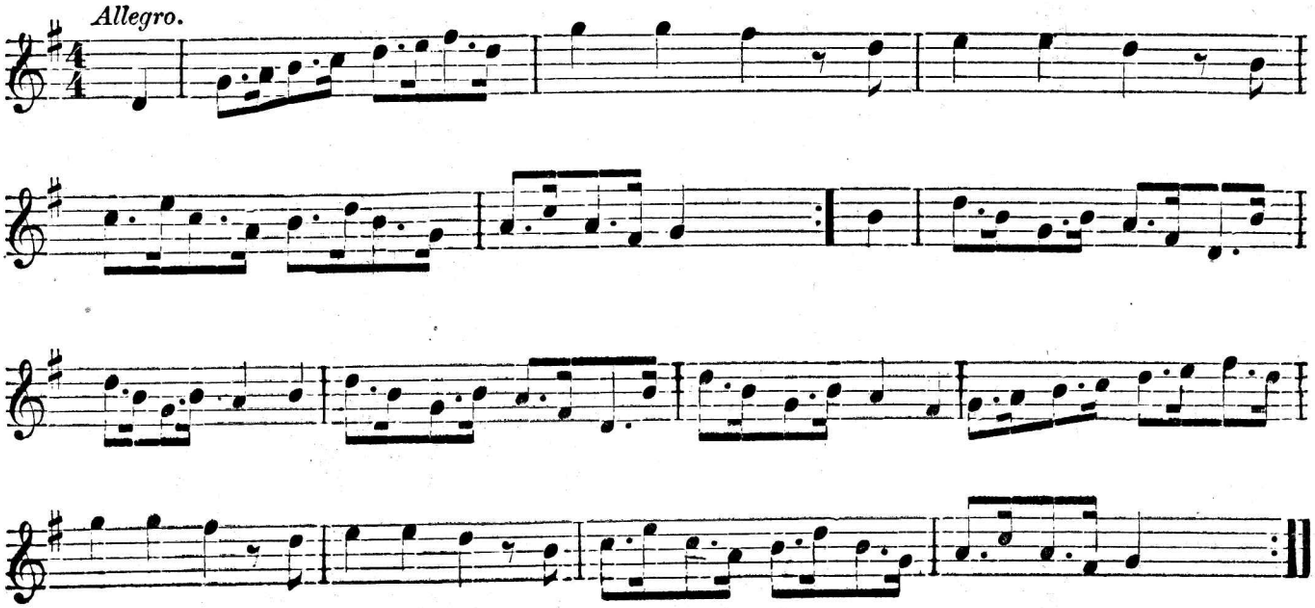
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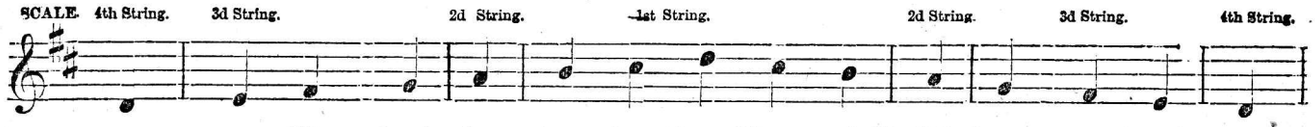
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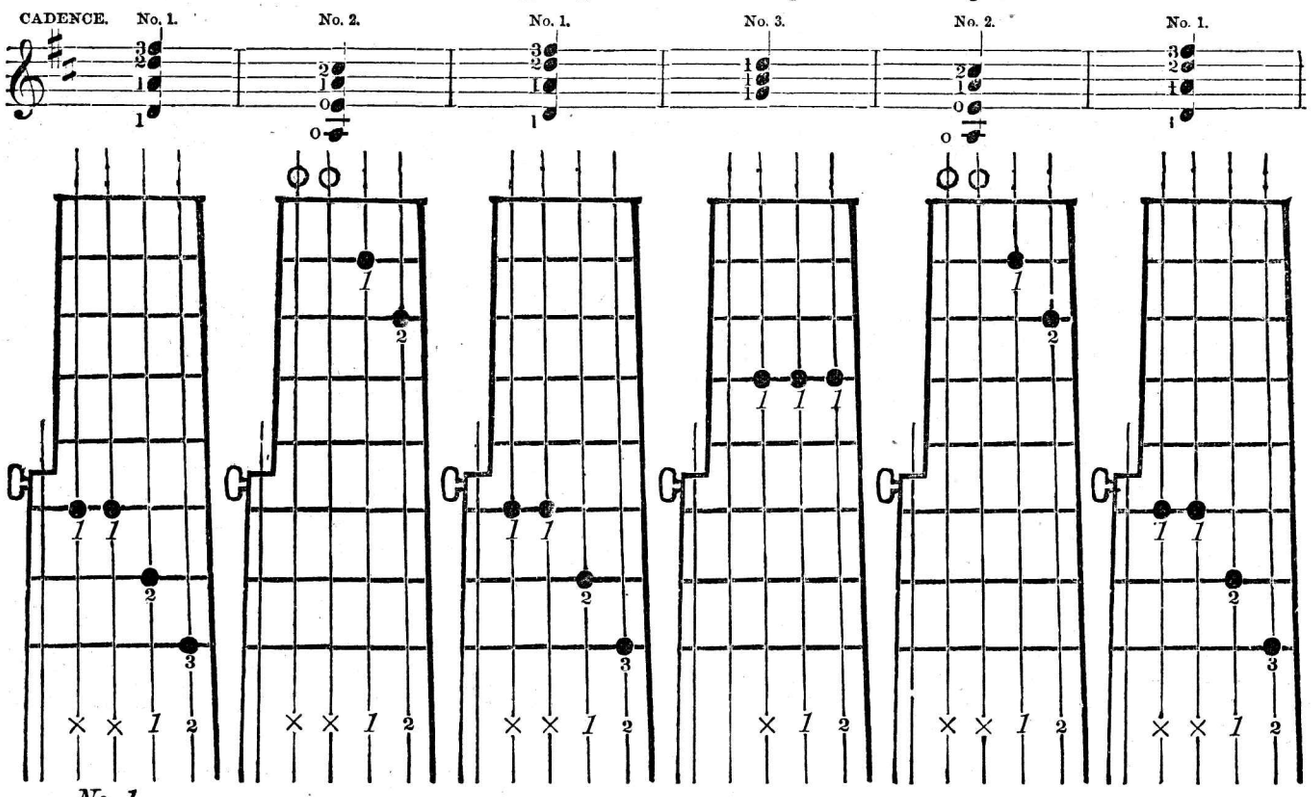

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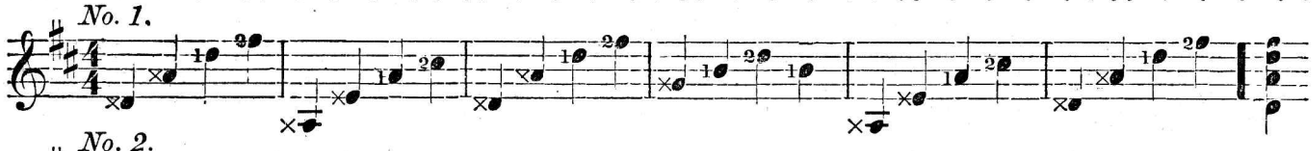
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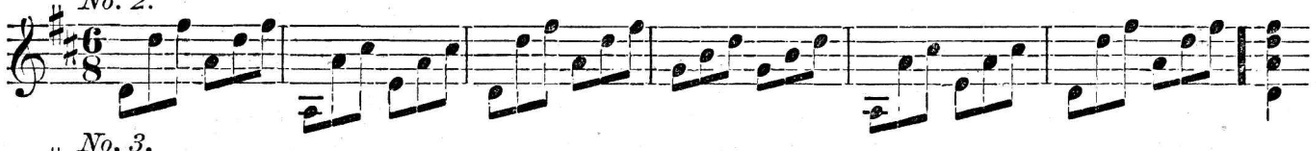
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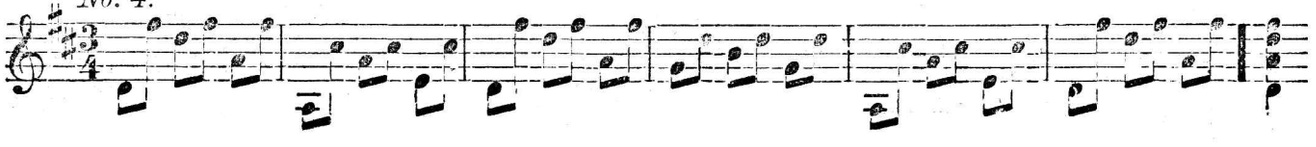
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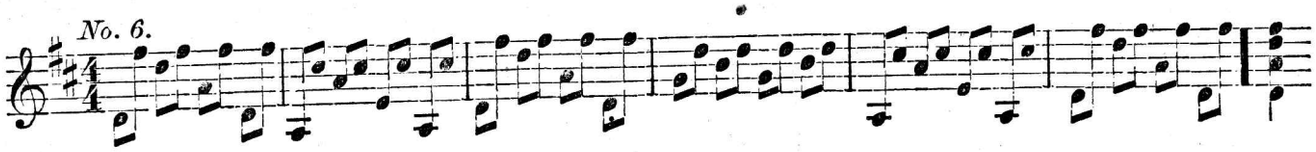
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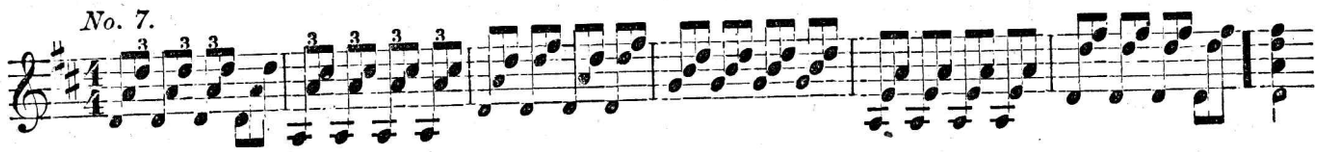
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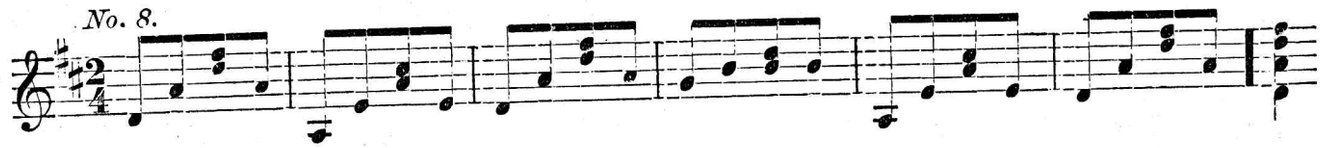
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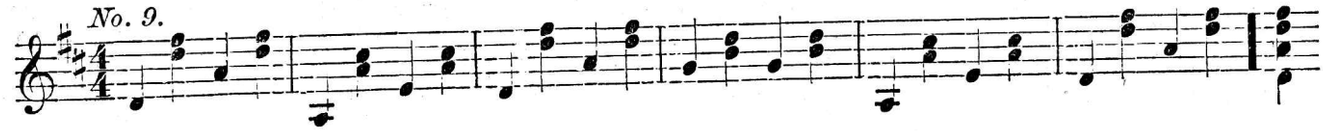
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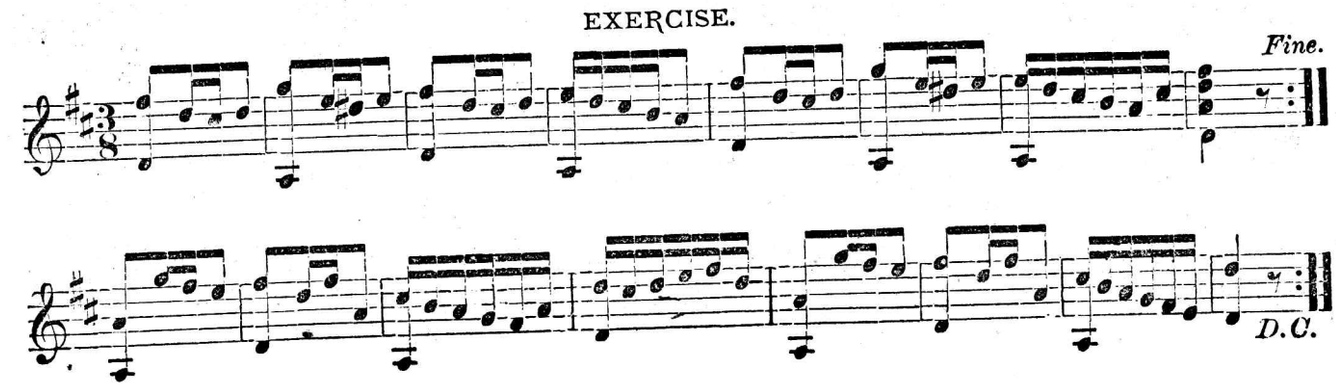

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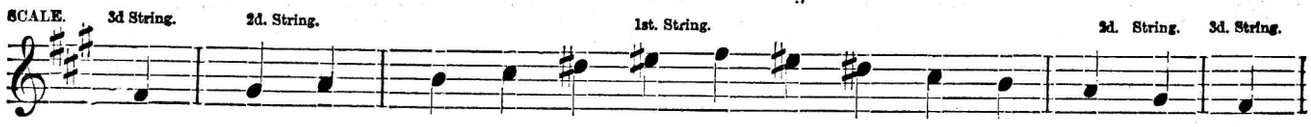
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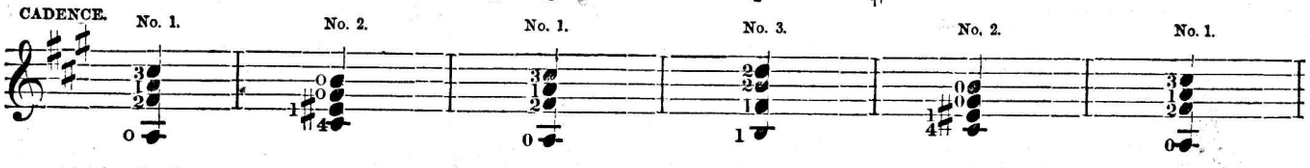

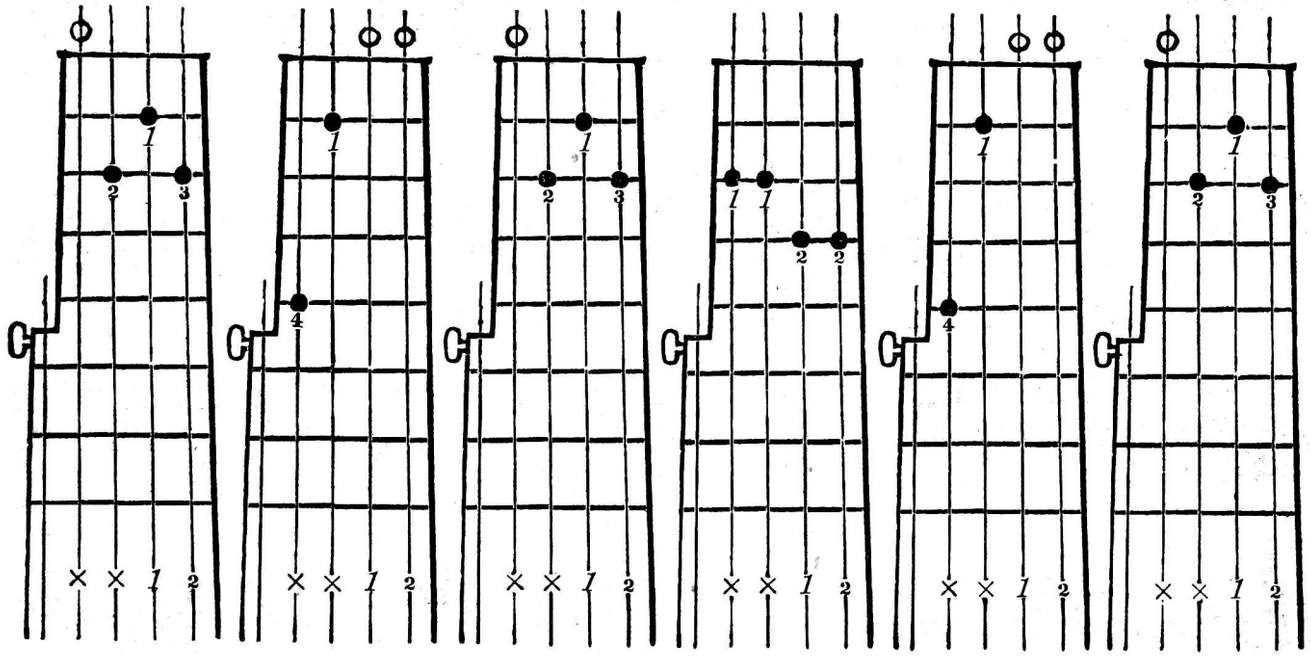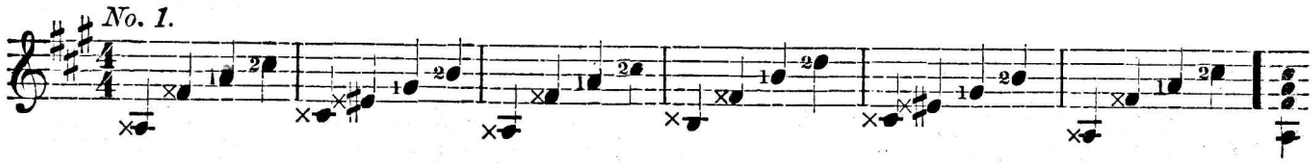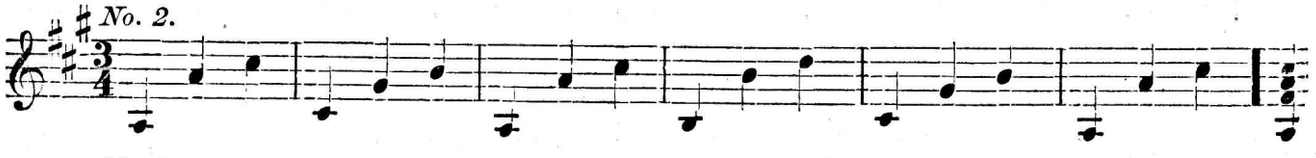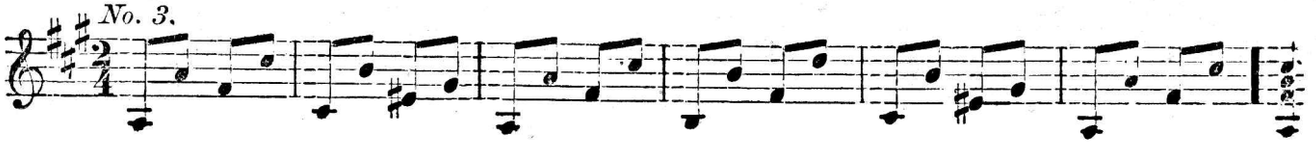

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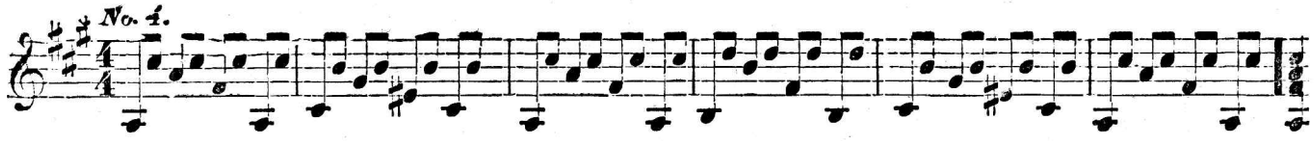
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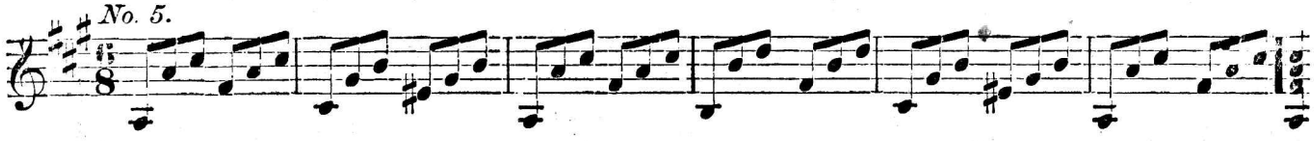
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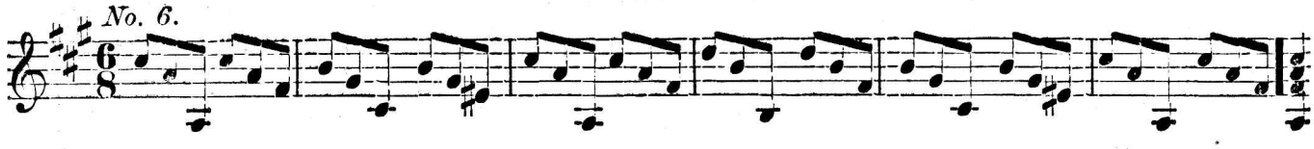
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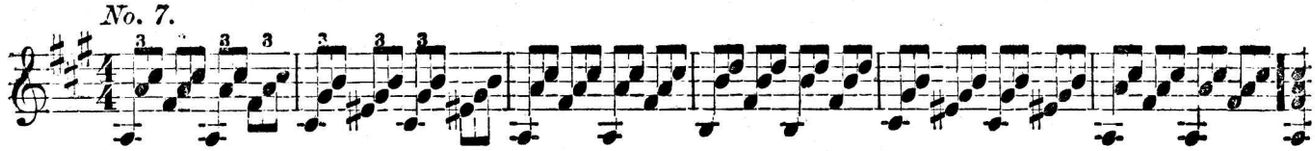
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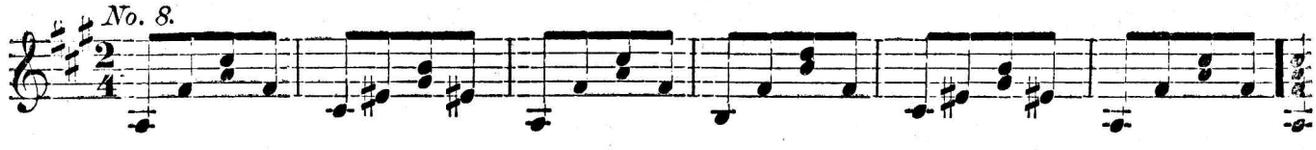
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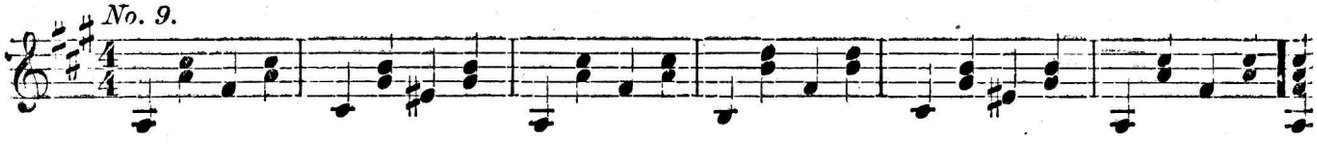
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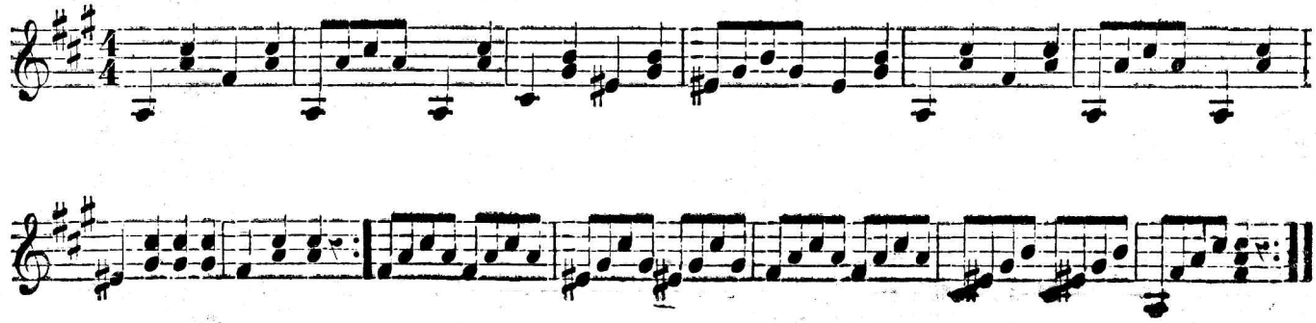
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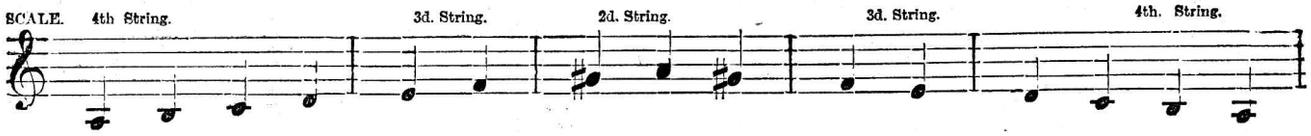
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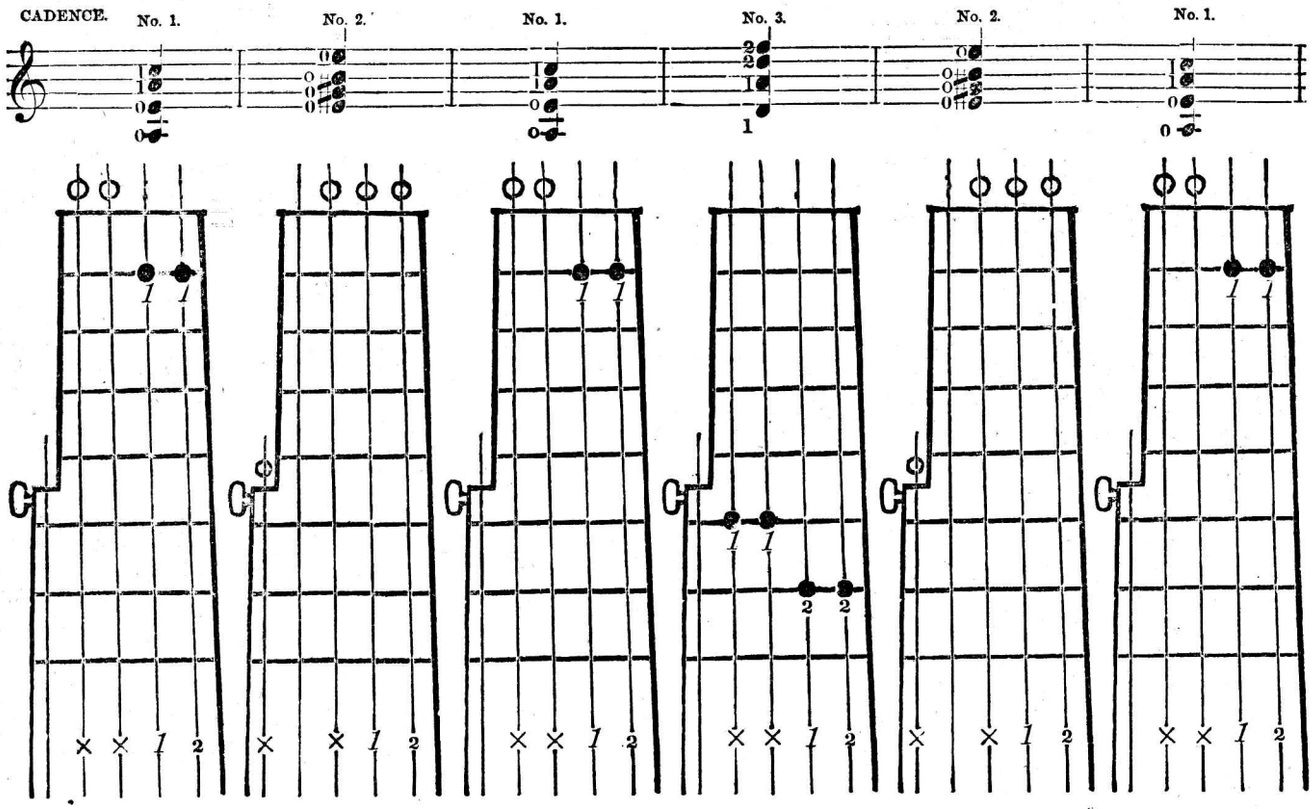

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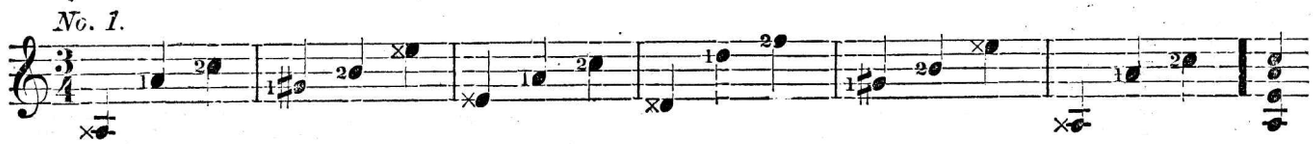
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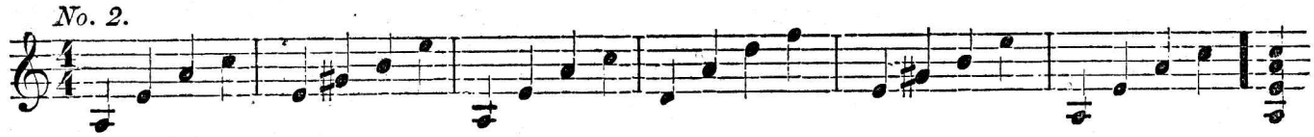
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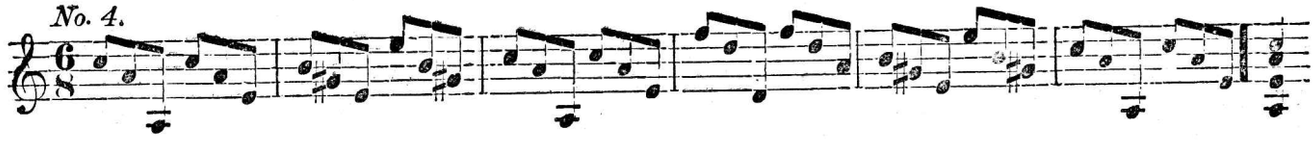
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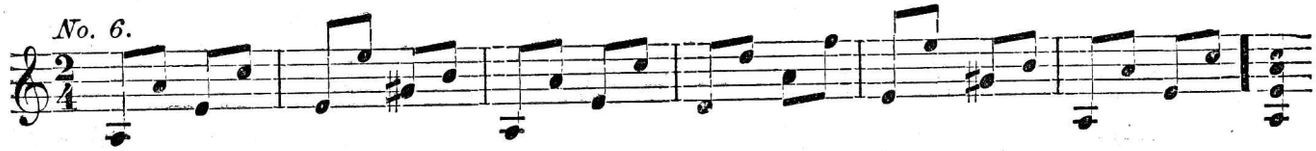
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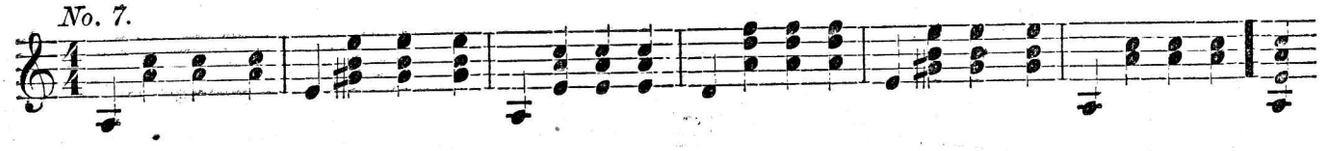
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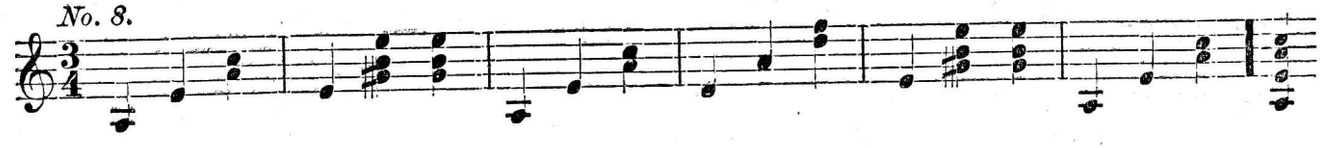
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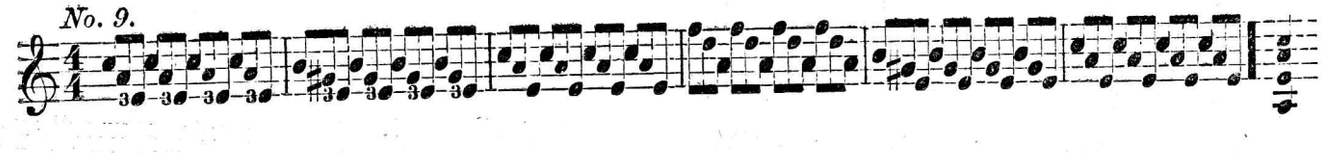
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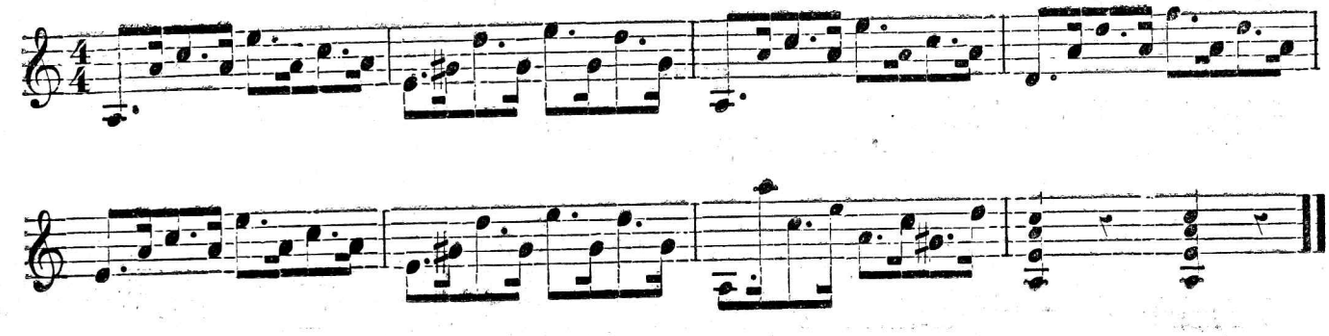
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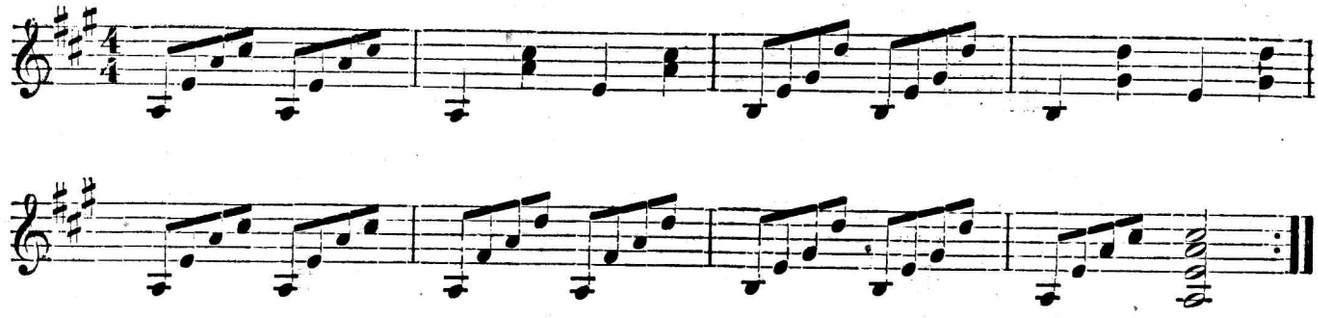
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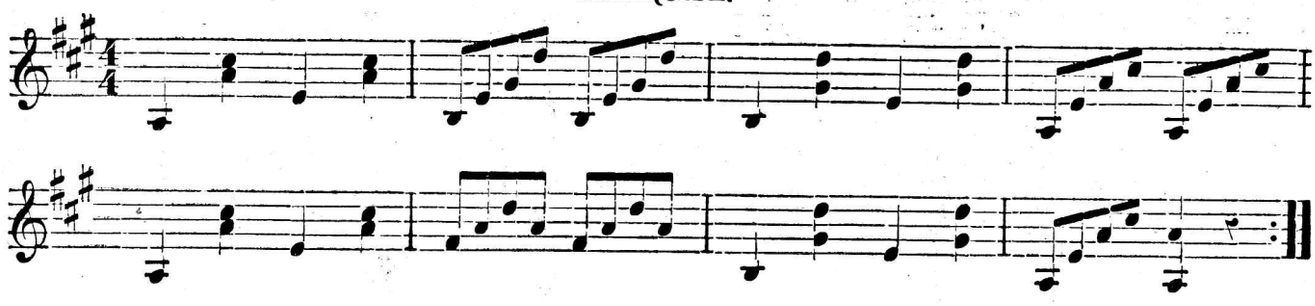

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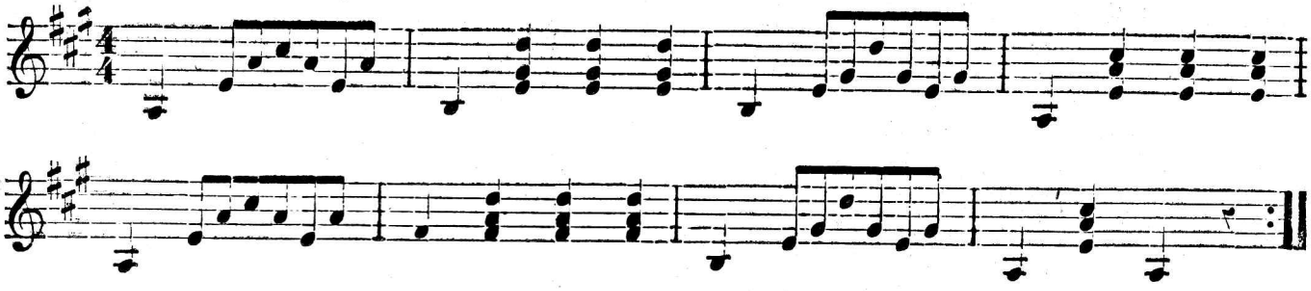
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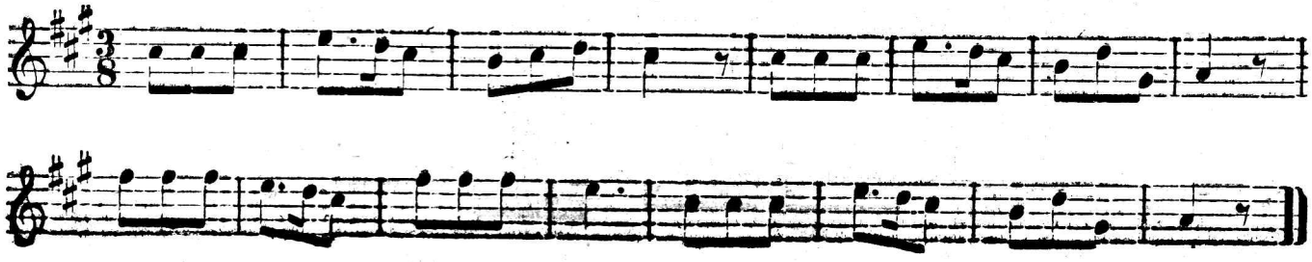
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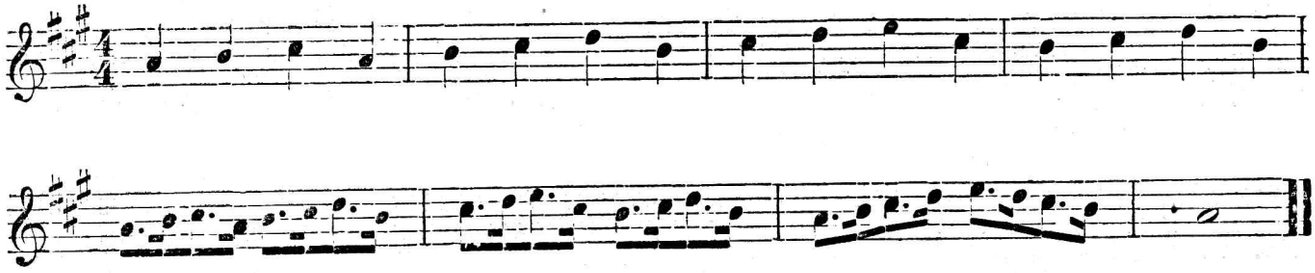
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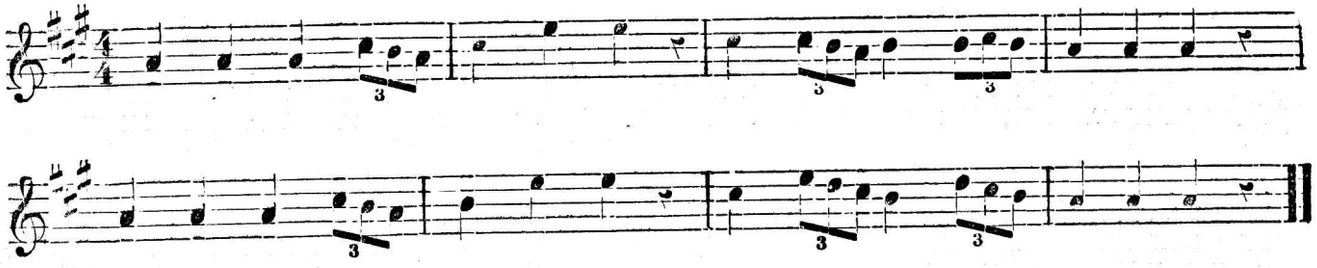
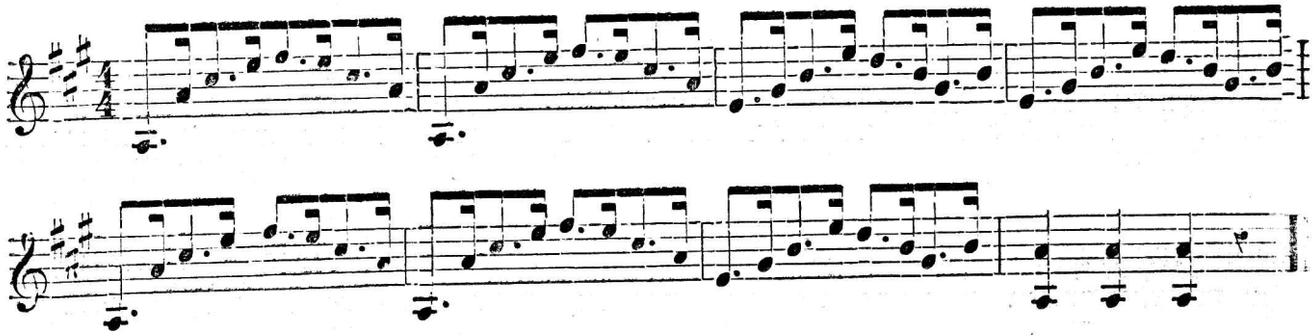


EXERCISE.

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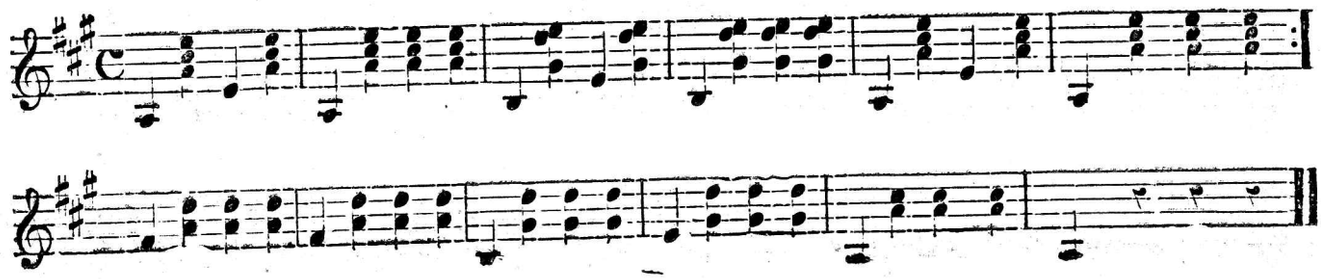
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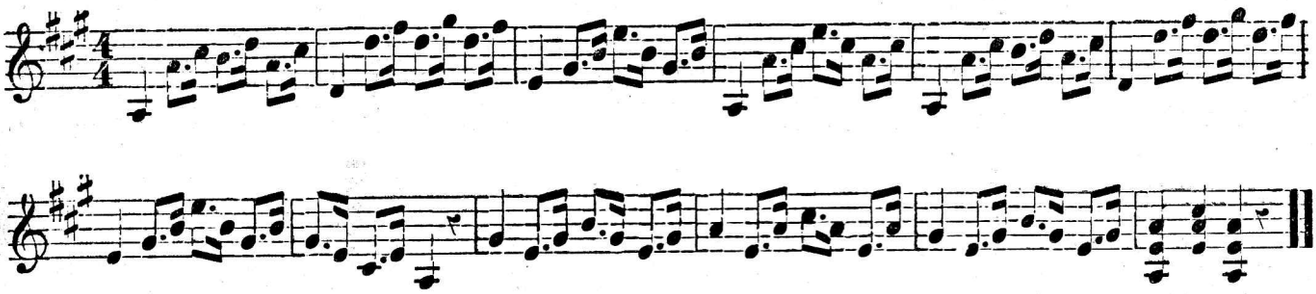
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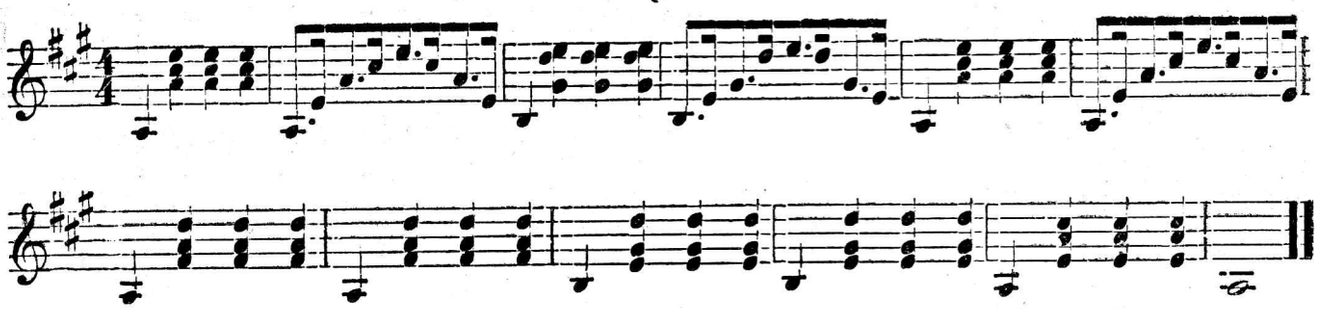
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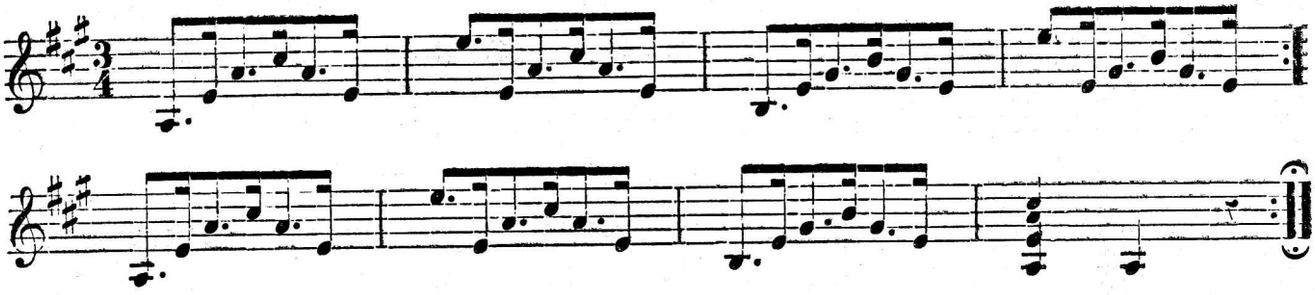
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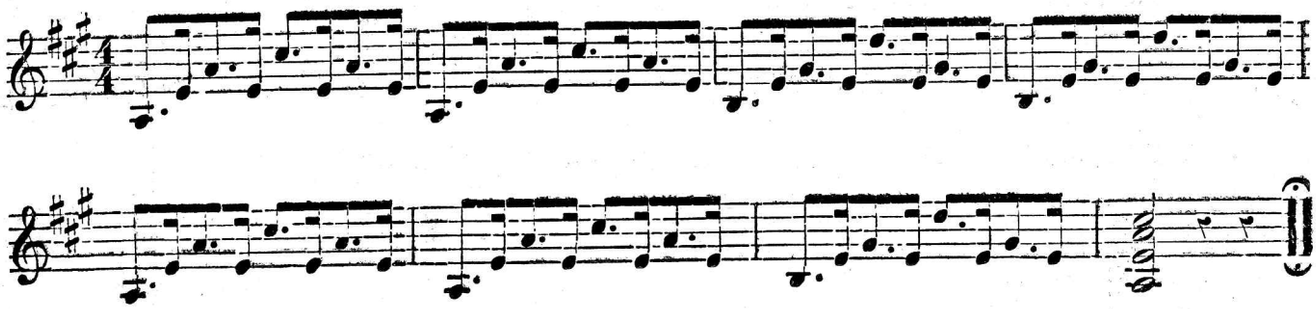
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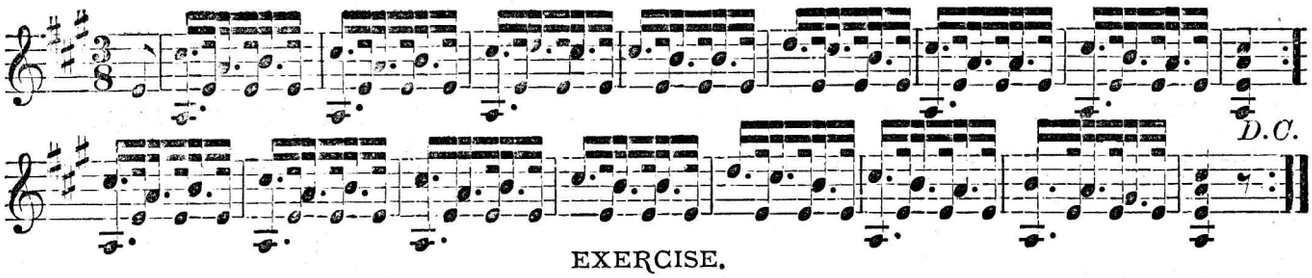
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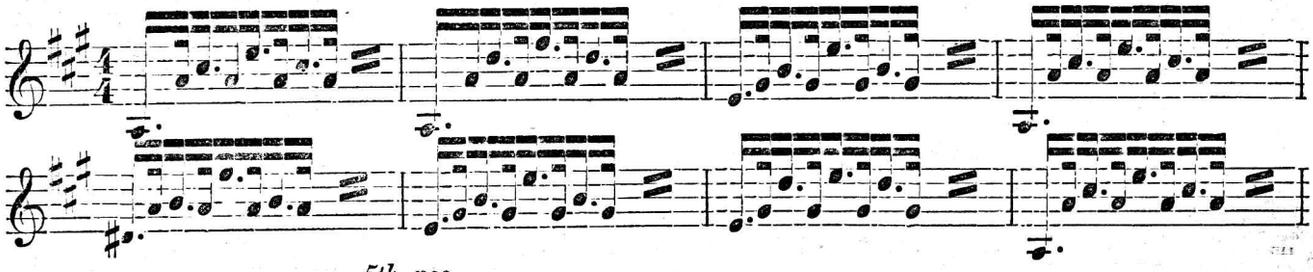
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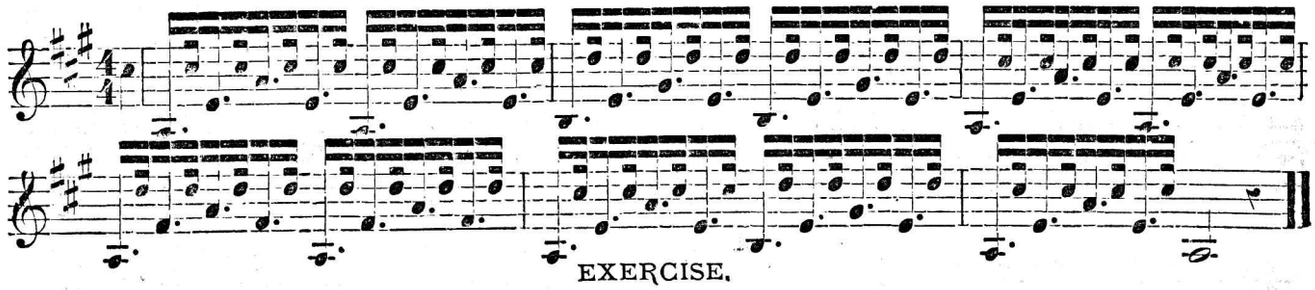
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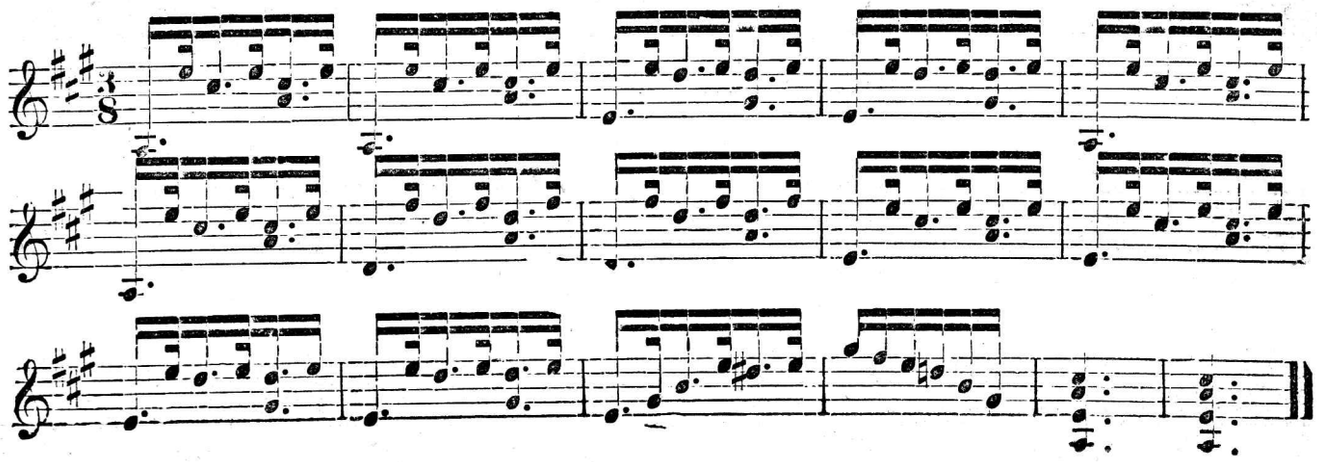
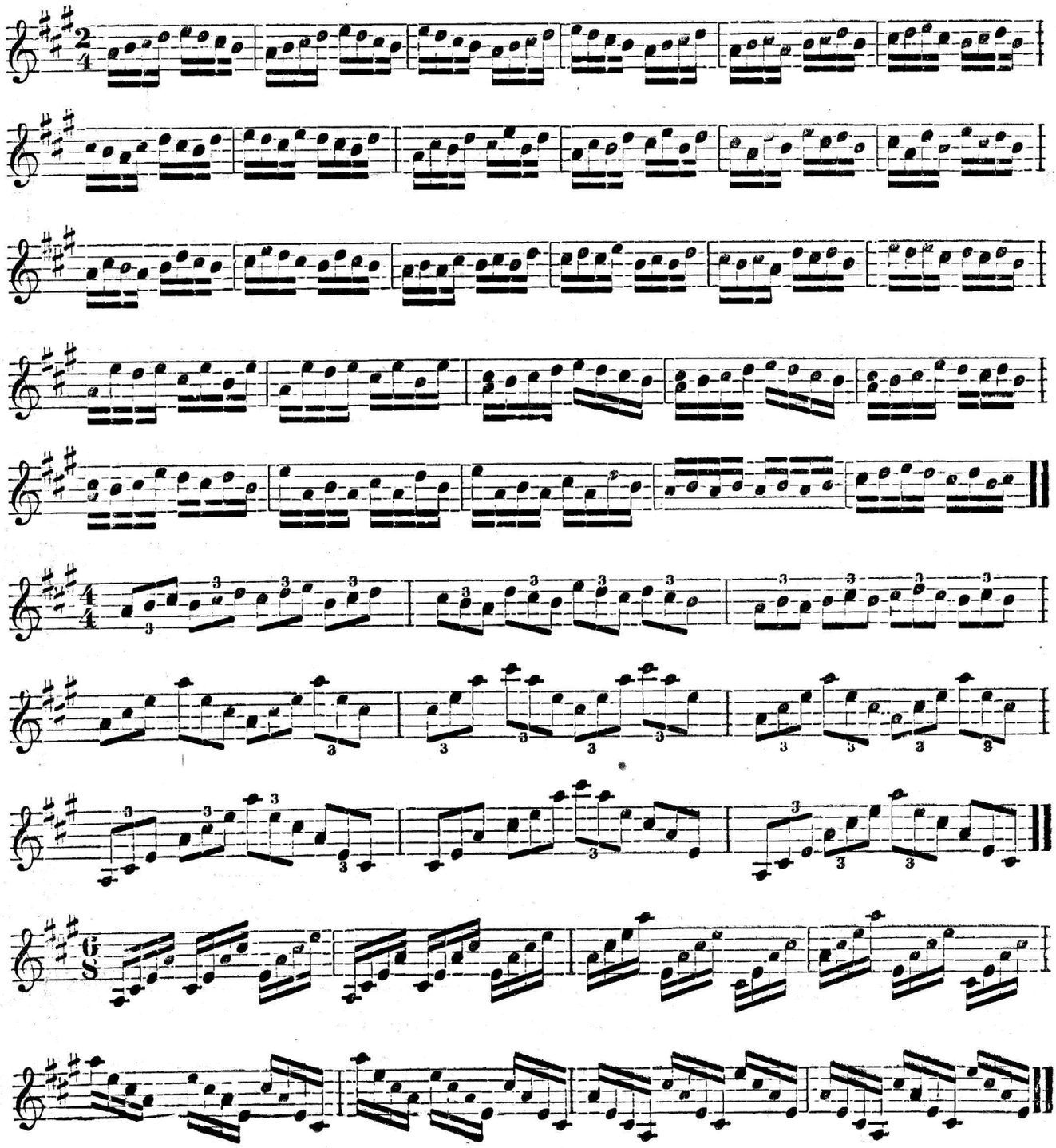
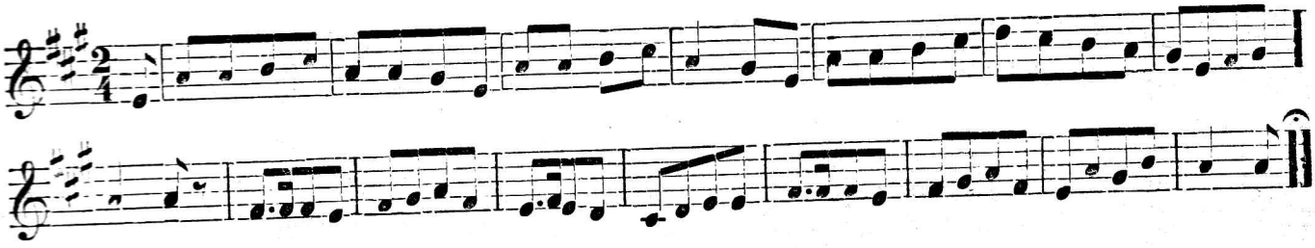
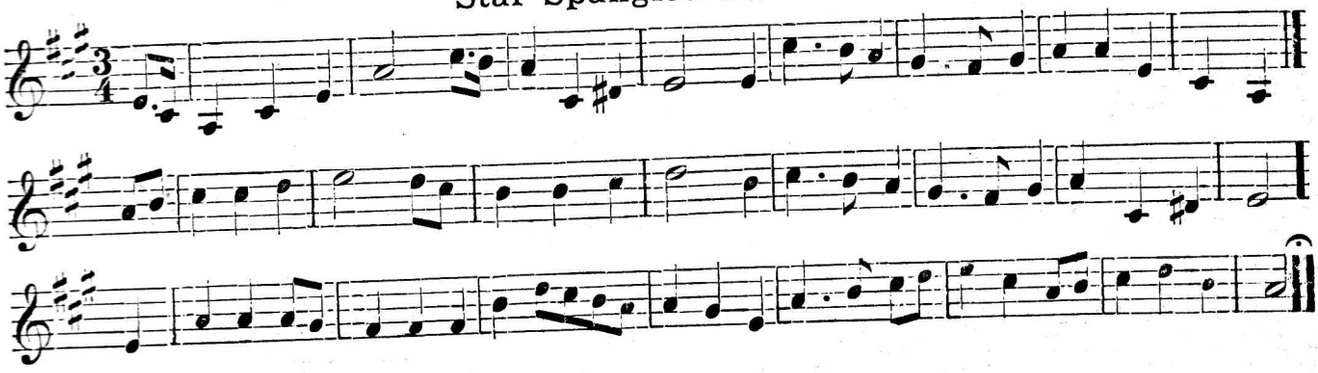

Various Movements.

INSTRUMENTAL PIECES.

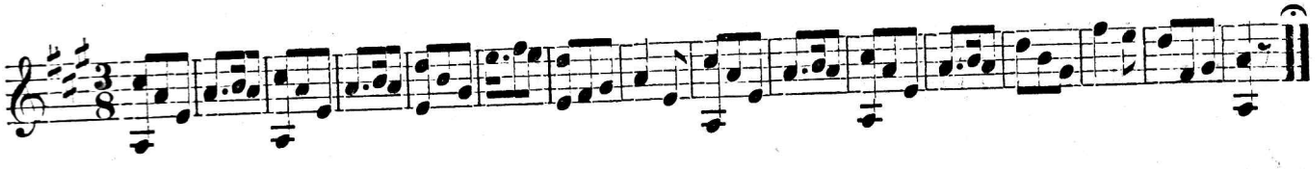
Yankee Doodle.

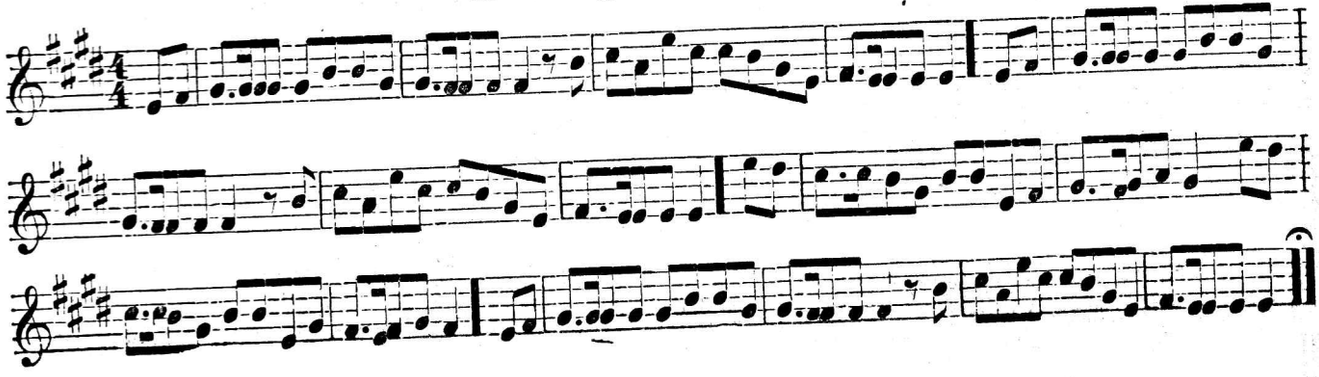
Arr. by Wm. Shay.

Star Spangled Banner.

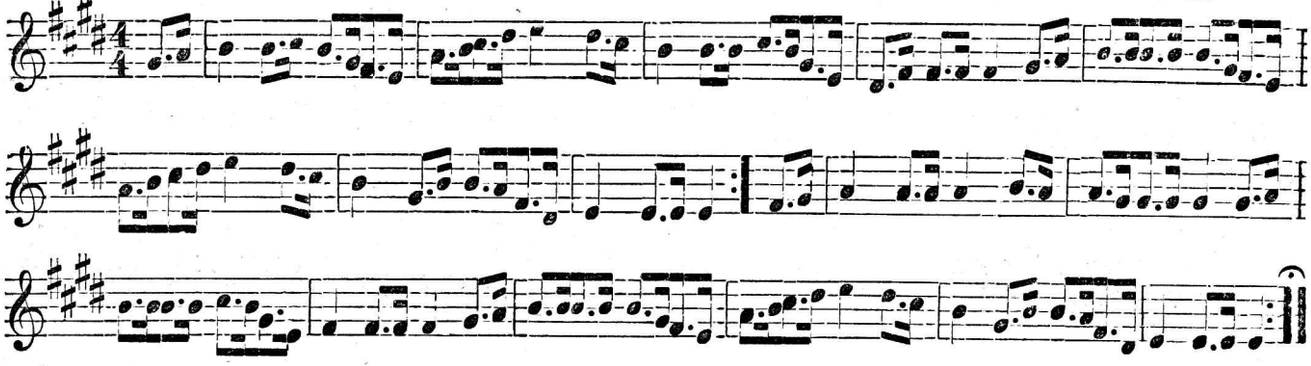
Wm. Shay.



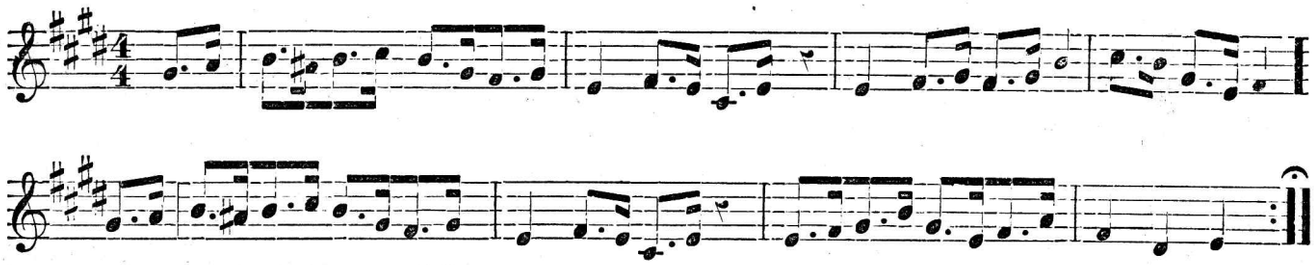
Trovatore.

Wm. Shay.

Wearing of the Green.

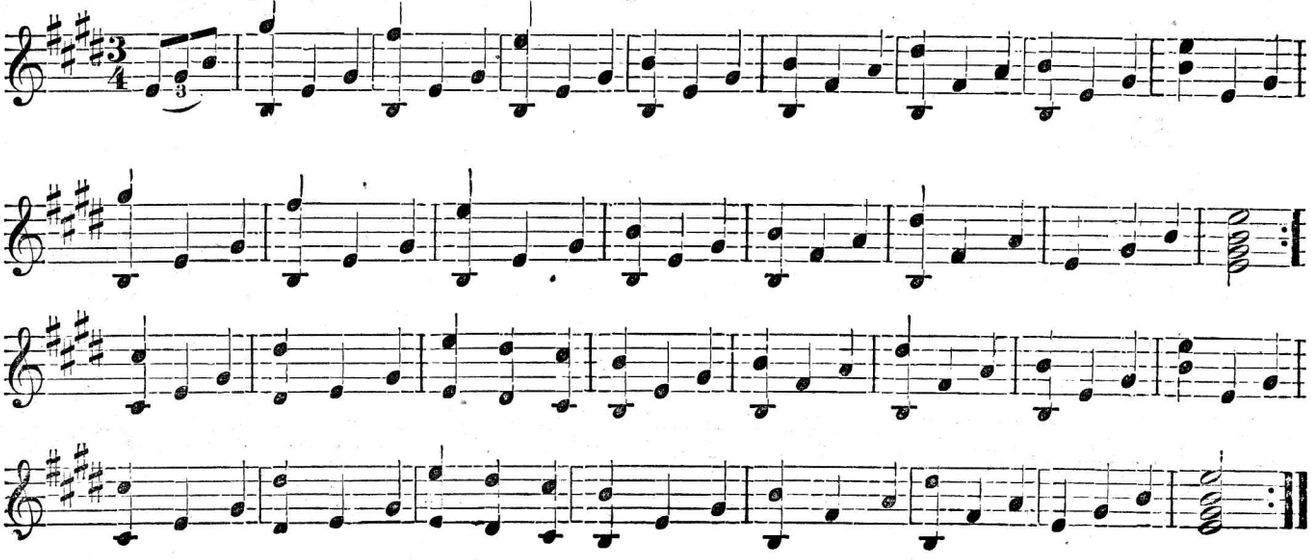
Wm. Shay.

March.

WM. SHAY.

Air.

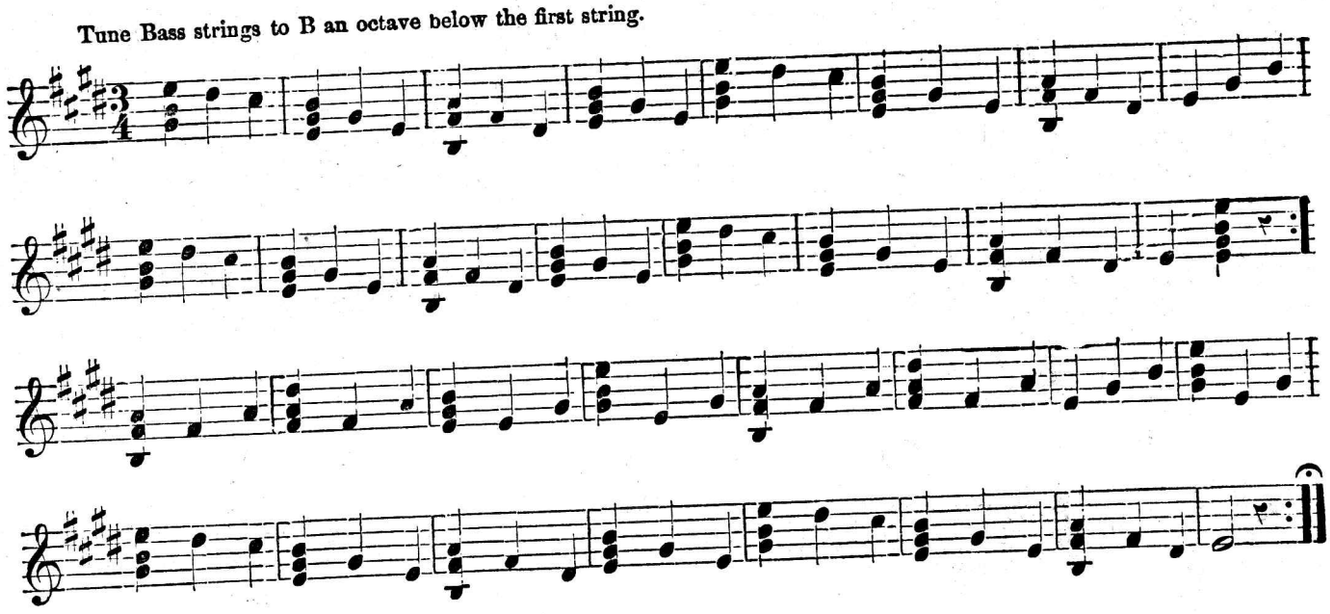
WM. SHAY,

Tune Bass string to B an octave below the first string.

Fandango Waltzes, No. 1.

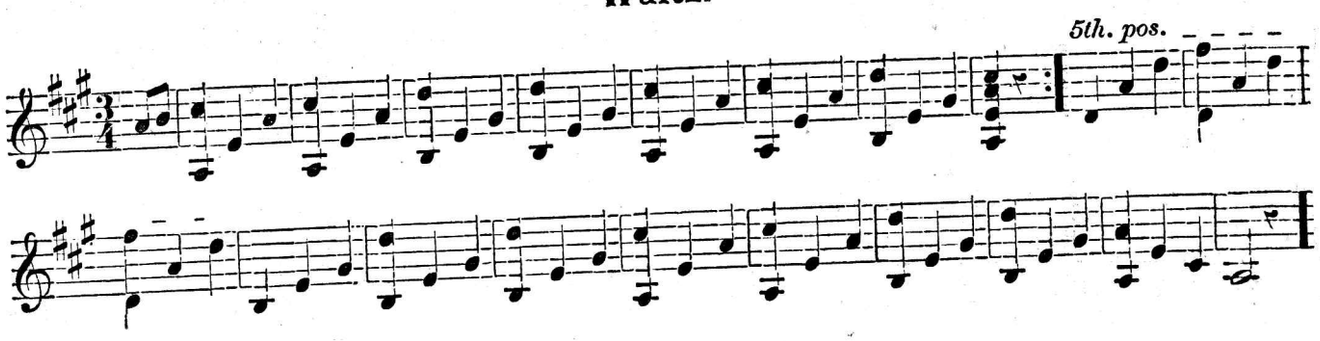
WM. SHAY.

Tune Bass String to B an octave below the first string.

Waltz No. 2.

WM. SHAY.

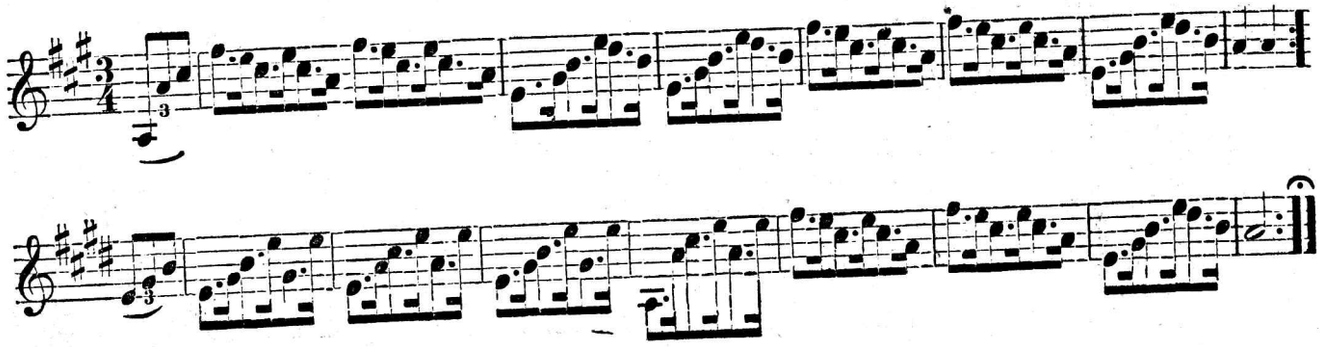
Tune Bass strings to B an octave below the first string.

Waltz.

WM. SHAY.

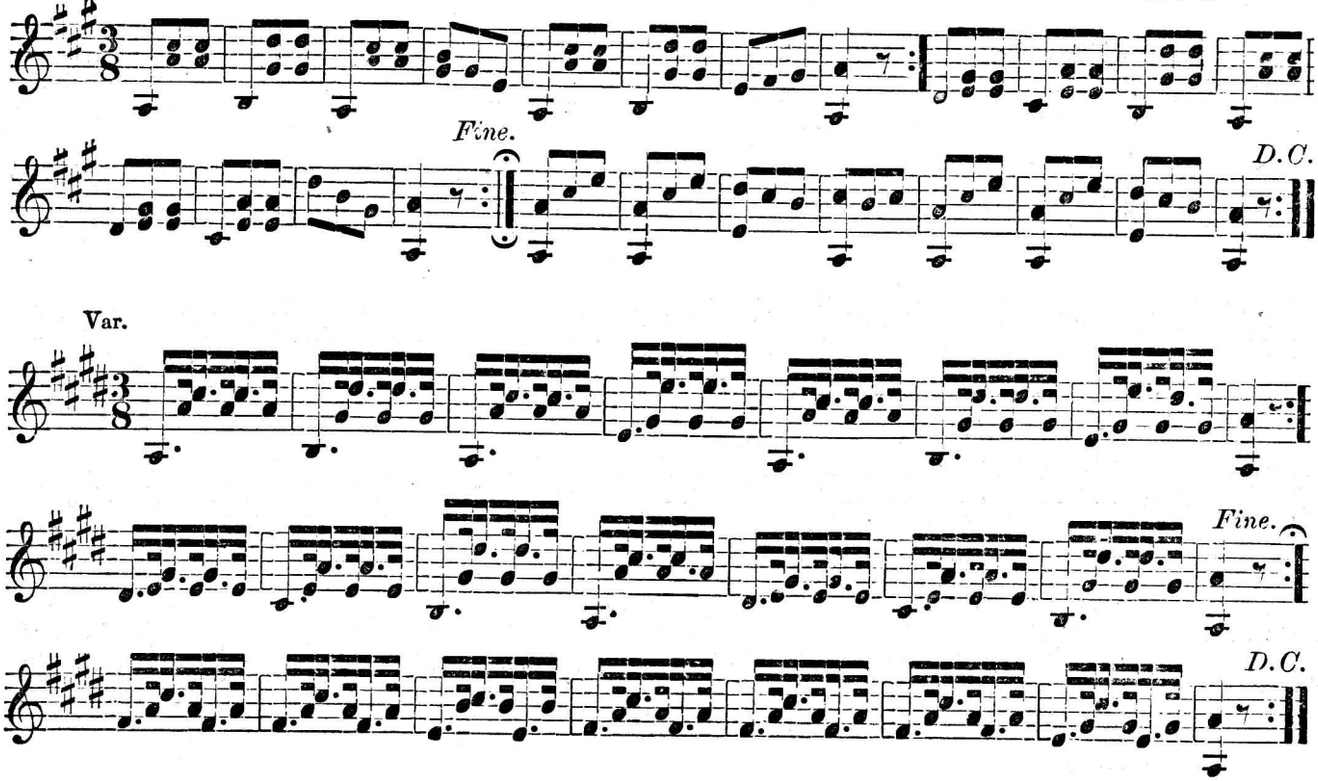


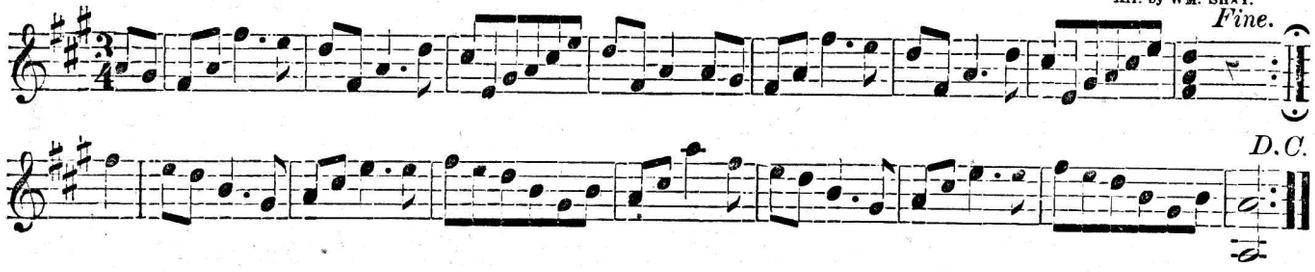
Zent Waltz.

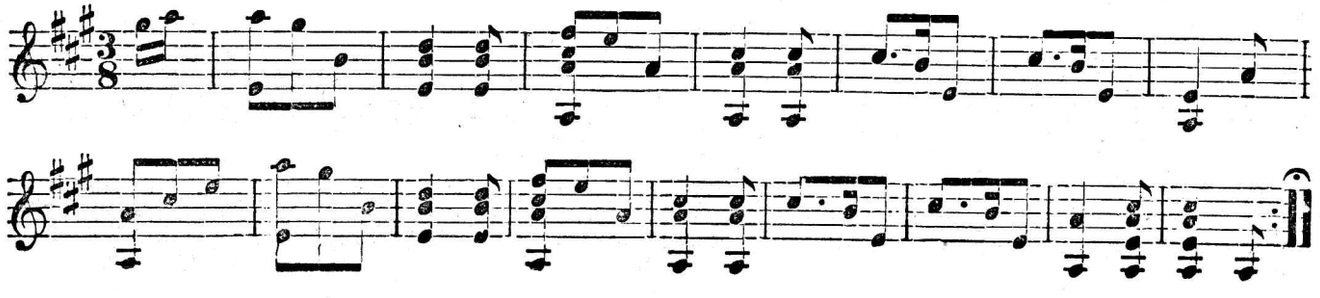
WM. SHAY.

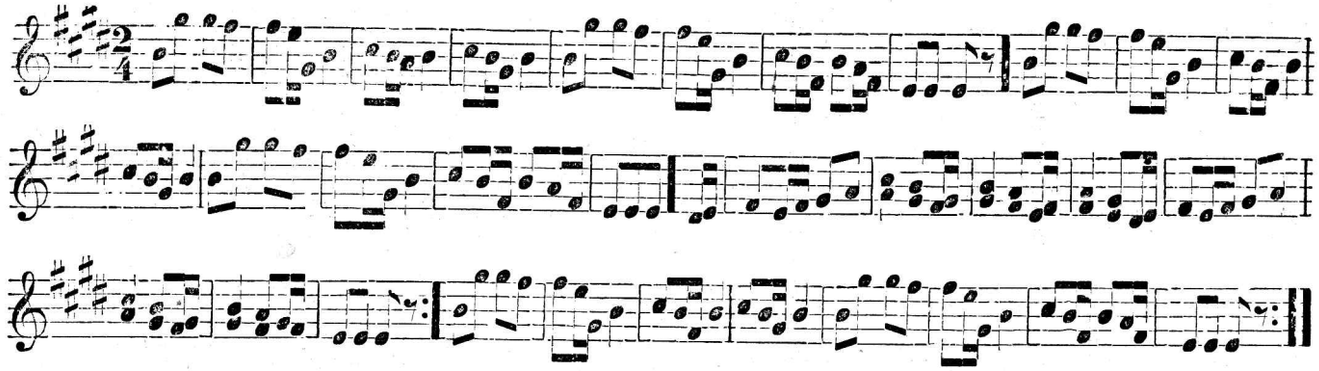


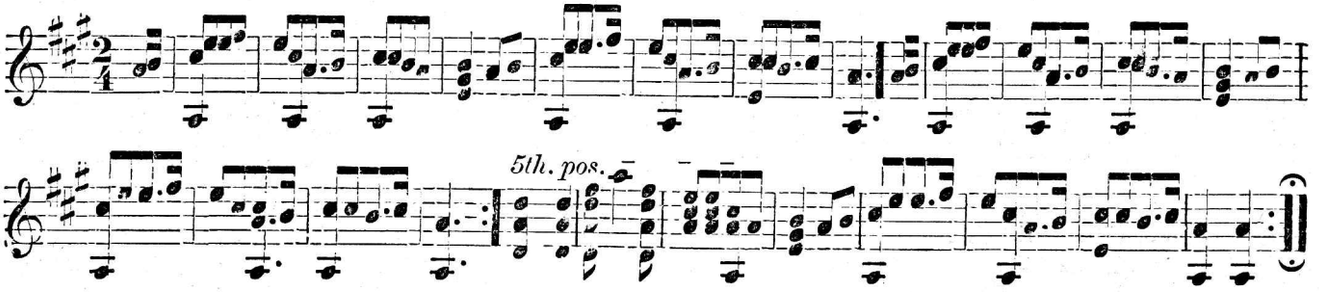
Pauline Waltz, Var.

WM. SHAY.

Silver Lake Waltz.

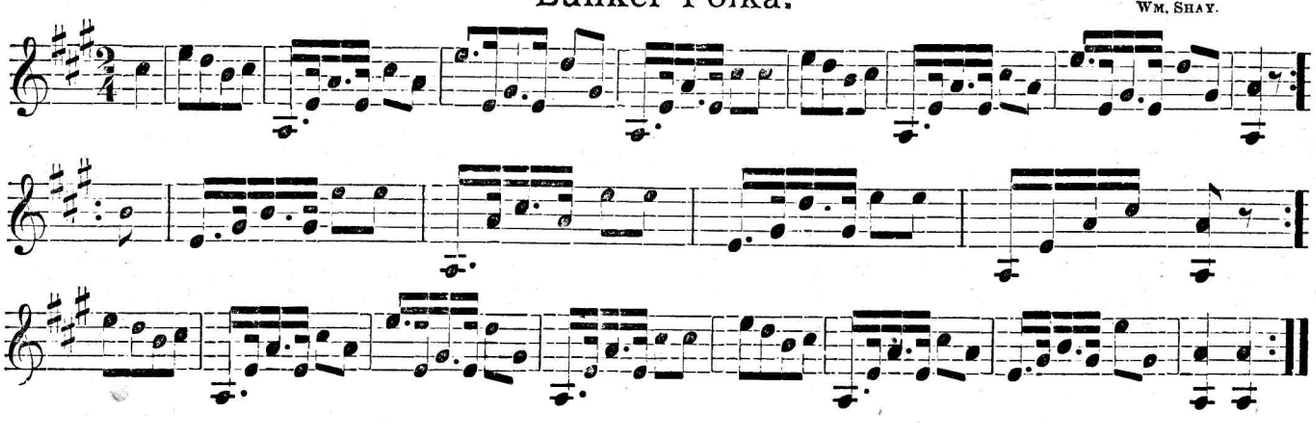
Arr. by WM. SHAY.

Aurora Waltz.

WM. SHAY.

Annie's Polka.

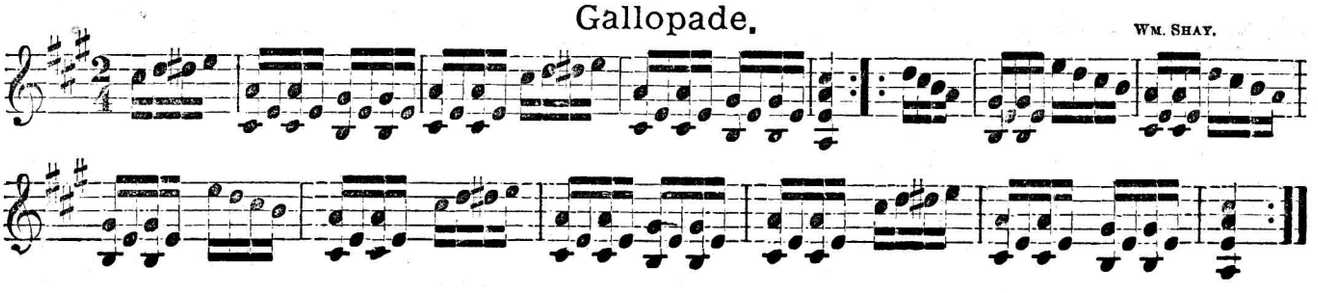
WM. SHAY.

Susanna Polka.

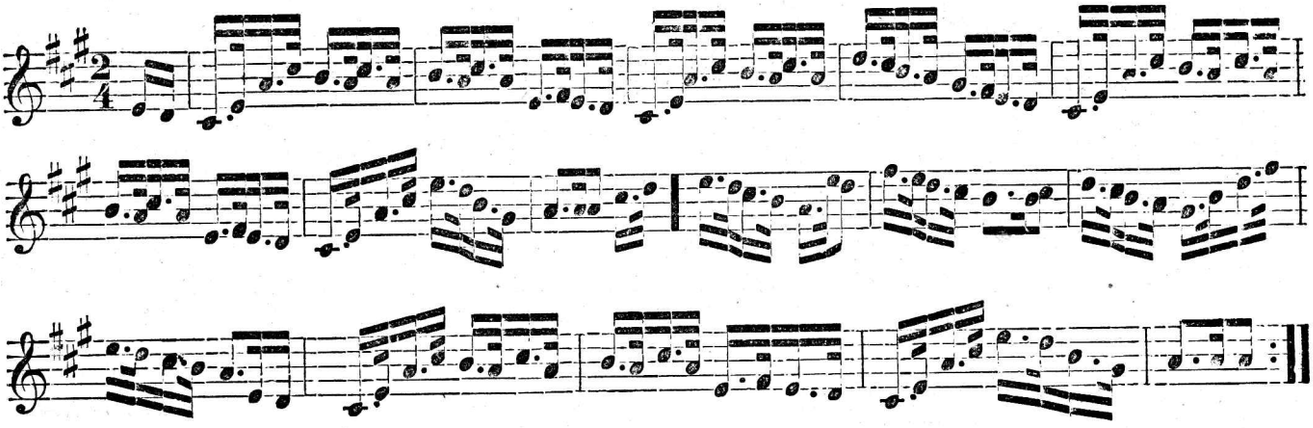
WM. SHAY.

Bunker Polka.

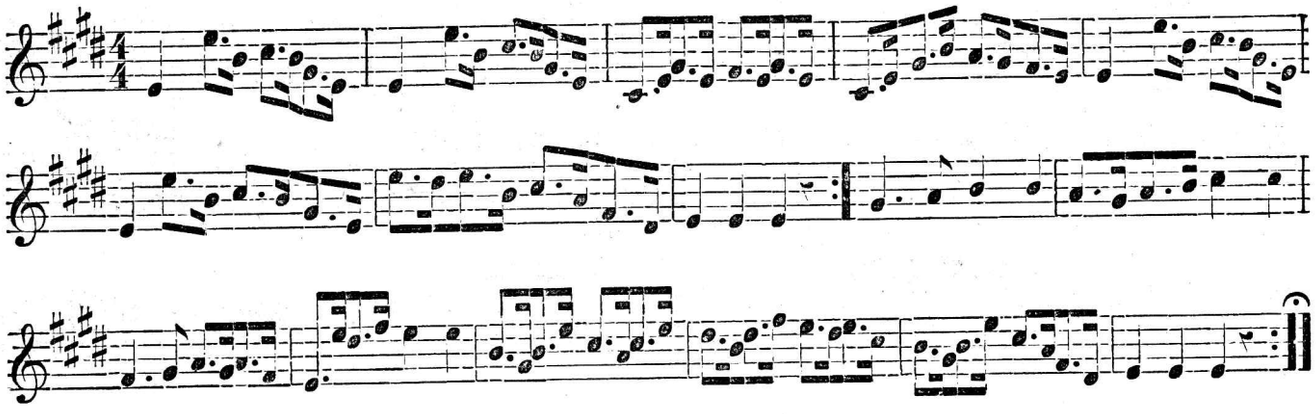
WM. SHAY.

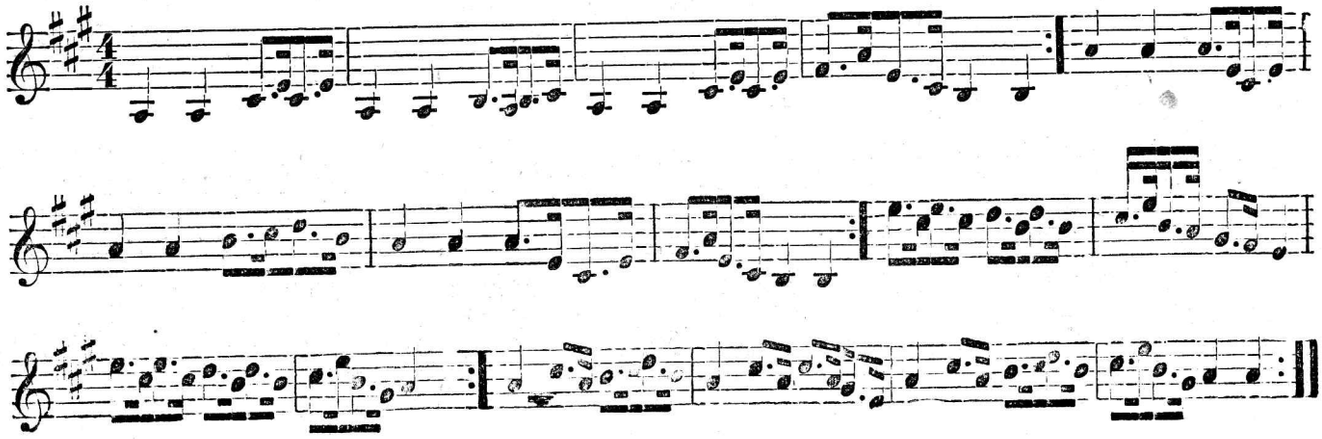


Gallopade.

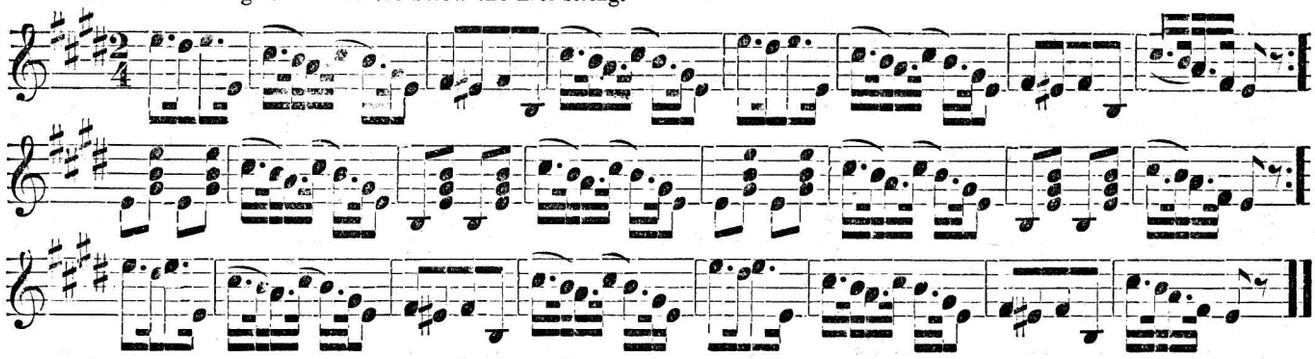
WM. SHAY.

Hornpipe.

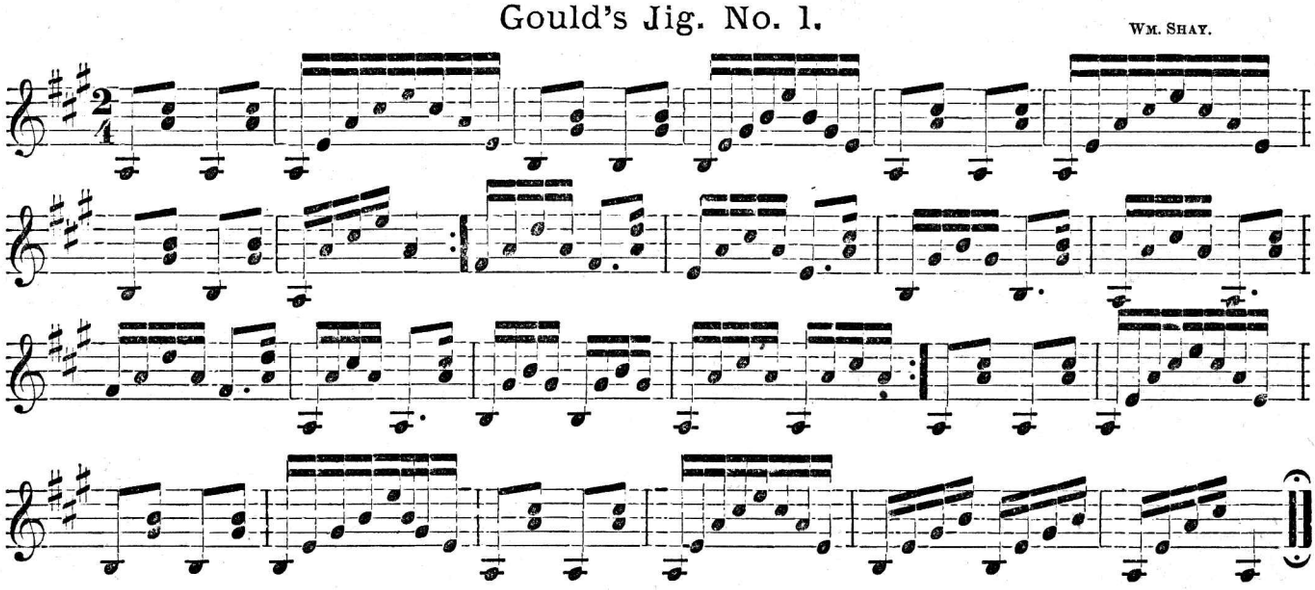
WM. SHAY.

Hornpipe.

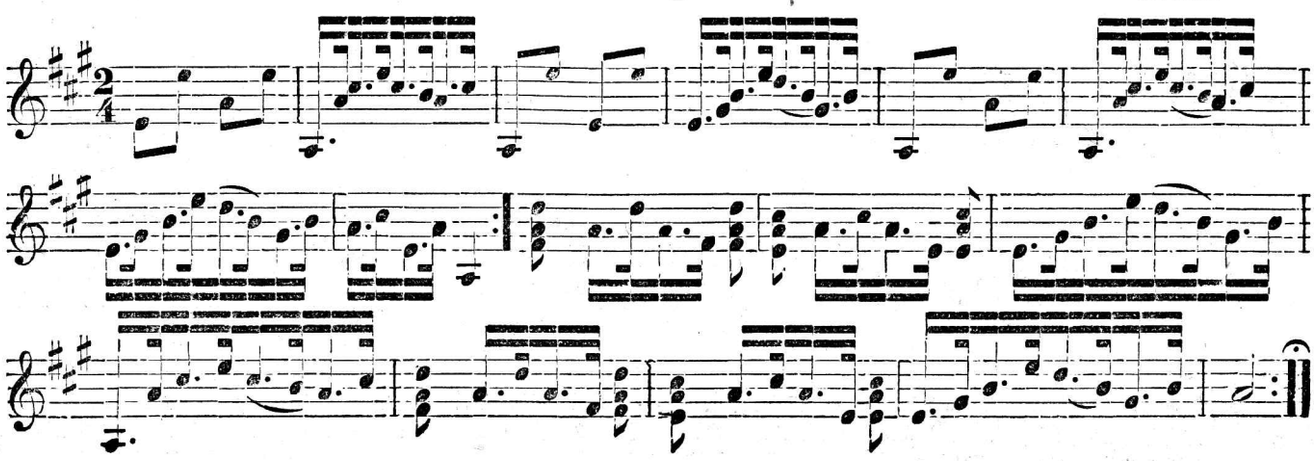
WM. SHAY.

Hornpipe.

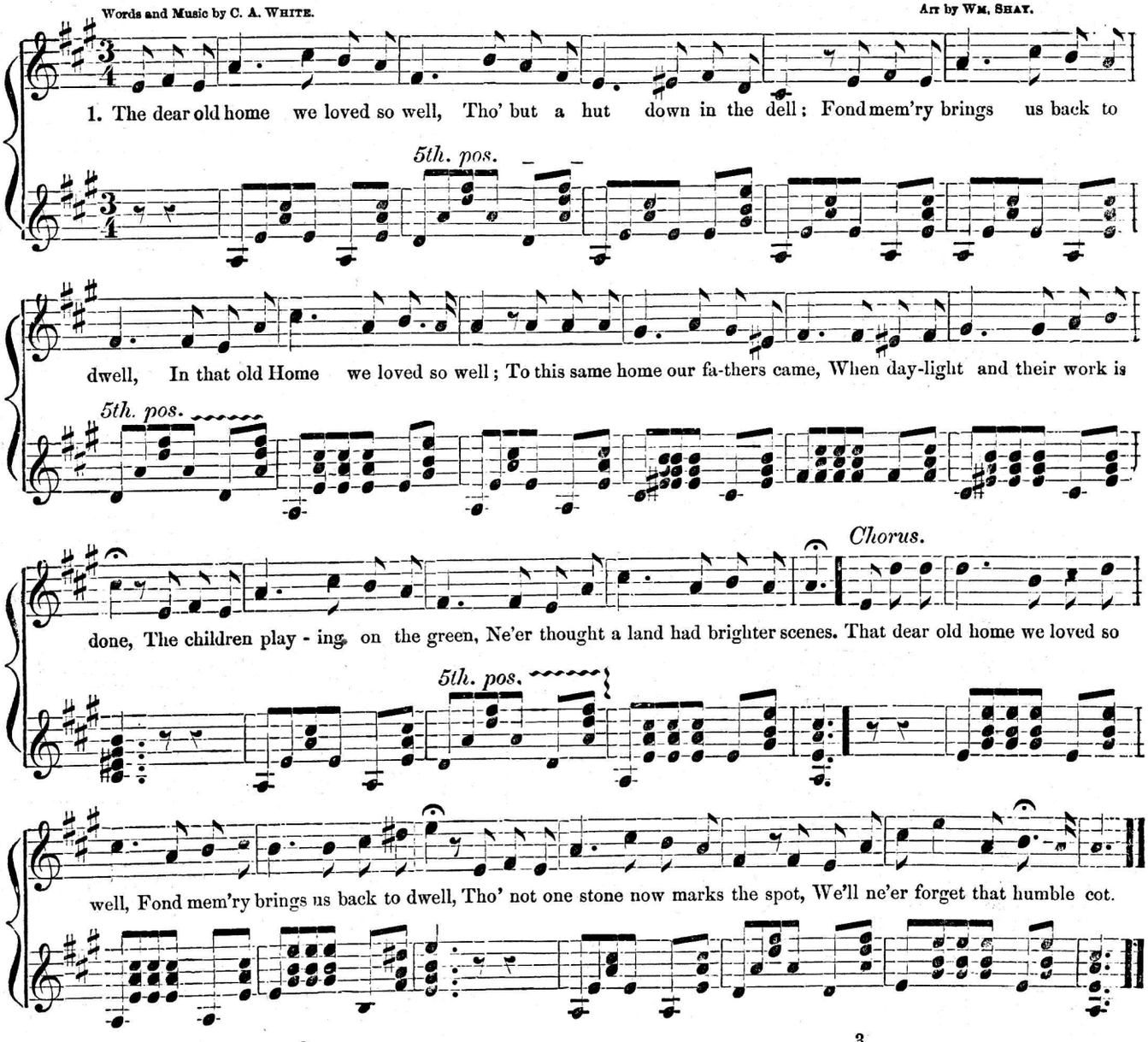
WM. SHAY.

Rainard's Jig.

WM. SHAY.

Tune Bass string to B an octave below the first string.

Gould's Jig. No. 1.

WM. SHAY.

Gould's Jig. No. 2.

WM. SHAY.

The dear old home we loved so well.

Words and Music by C. A. WHITE. Arr by WM. SHAY.

1. The dear old home we loved so well, Tho' but a hut down in the dell; Fond mem'ry brings us back to
5th. pos.
dwell, In that old Home we loved so well; To this same home our fa-thers came, When day-light and their work is
5th. pos.
Chorus.
done, The children play - ing on the green, Ne'er thought a land had brighter scenes. That dear old home we loved so
5th. pos.
well, Fond mem'ry brings us back to dwell, Tho' not one stone now marks the spot, We'll ne'er forget that humble cot.

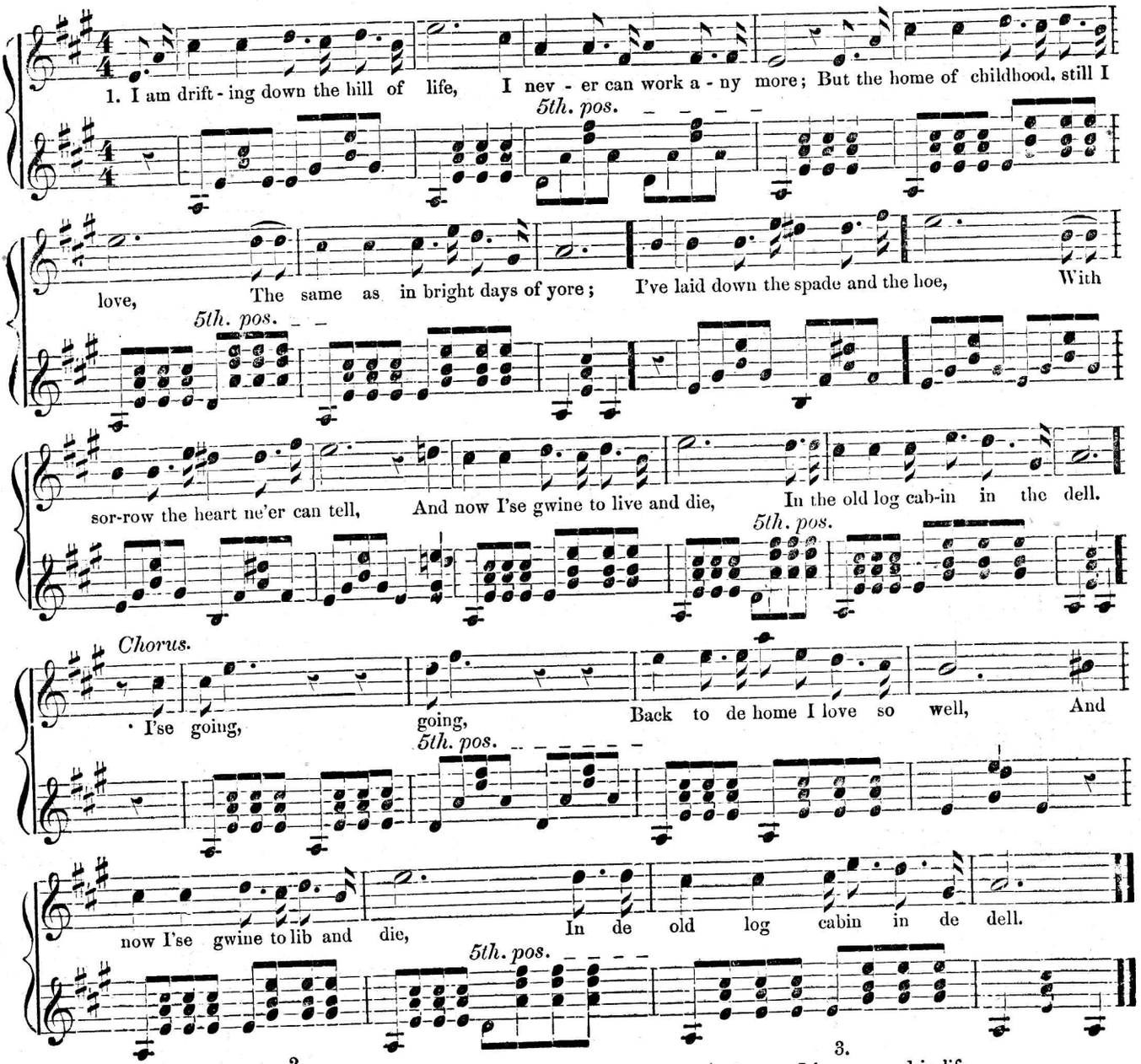
2.

How sweet the orange blossoms bloom,
Around that humble cottage home;
Alas how changed all things have come,
Since we went forth the world to roam.
The mocking bird now sings no more,
Around our humble cottage door;
Tho' not one stone now marks the spot,
I'll not forget the dear old spot

3.

Good bye old home, thy charm has fled,
I bid farewell to soil and sod;
The only tie left is the dead,
And those I leave in trust with God.
My children they are scattered now,
Since freedom brought to them its boon:
That I am old and feeble now,
My freedom lies beyond the tomb.

The Old Log Cabin in the Dell.

Words and Music by C. A. WHITE. Arr. by WM. SHAY.

1. I am drift - ing down the hill of life, I nev - er can work a - ny more; But the home of childhood, still I
5th. pos.
love, The same as in bright days of yore; I've laid down the spade and the hoe, With
5th. pos.
sor-row the heart ne'er can tell, And now I'se gwine to live and die, In the old log cab-in in the dell.
5th. pos.
Chorus.
I'se going, going, Back to de home I love so well, And
5th. pos.
now I'se gwine to lib and die, In de old log cabin in de dell.
5th. pos.

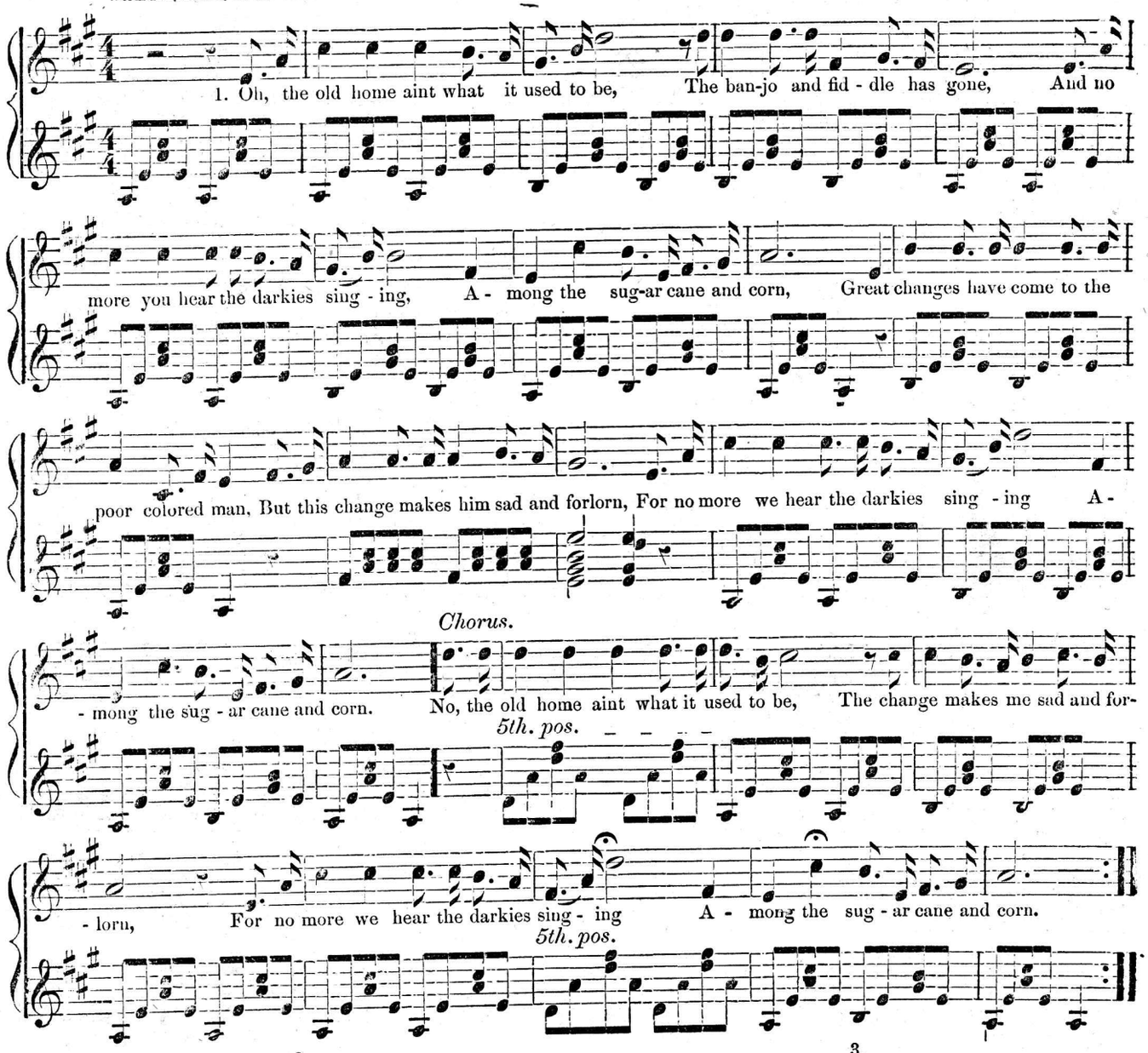
2.

When they speak of how I'se gwine to live,
I don't zactly know how 'twill be,
But, I don't spect want will ever come
While massa libs who set me free;
He always did like all de hands,
He was sad when he bid dem farewell;
I don't think he would see them starve
In the old log cabin in the dell

3.

Many changes I have passed in life,
Some hard ones I don't like to tell,
But dere soon must be another change,
In the old log cabin in the dell.
The angel of peace will be dere,
Wid the keys of de home where we dwell,
And den I'll bid a long farewell,
To de old log cabin in the dell.

The Old Home aint what it used to be.

Words and Music by C. A. WHITE. Arr. by WM. SHAY.

1. Oh, the old home aint what it used to be, The ban-jo and fid - dle has gone, And no
more you hear the darkies sing - ing, A - mong the sug-ar cane and corn, Great changes have come to the
poor colored man, But this change makes him sad and forlorn, For no more we hear the darkies sing - ing A -
Chorus.
- mong the sug - ar cane and corn. No, the old home aint what it used to be, The change makes me sad and for-
5th. pos.
- lorn, For no more we hear the darkies sing - ing A - mong the sug - ar cane and corn.
5th. pos.

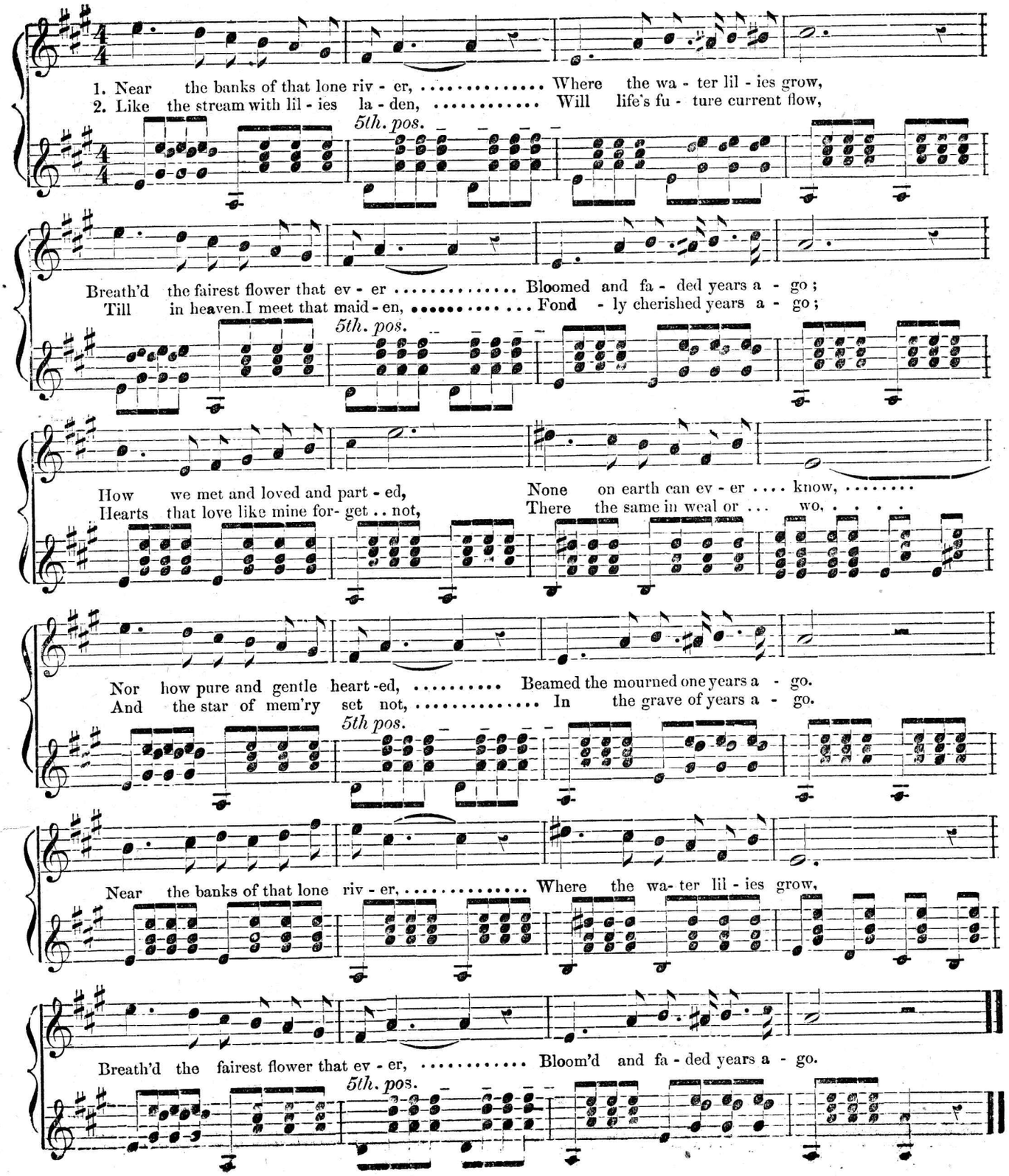
2.

In the fields I've worked when I thought 'twas hard,
But night brought its pleasures and rest,
In the old home down by the river side,
The place of all the world the best.
Oh, where are the children that once used to play
In the lane by the old cabin door,
They are scattered now, and o'er the world they roam,
The old man ne'er will see them more.

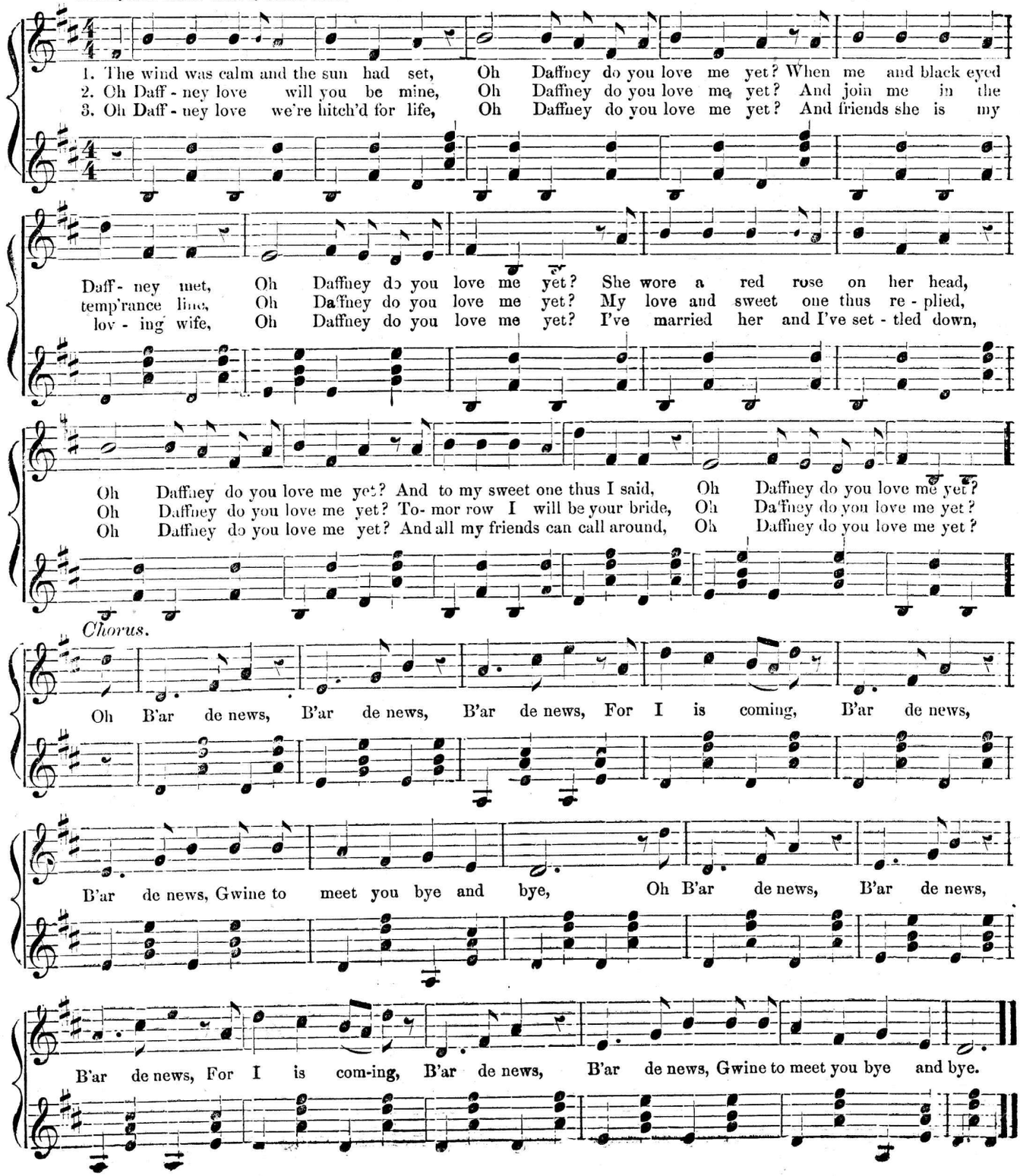
3.

Now the old man would rather lived and died
In the home where his children were born;
But when freedom came to the colored man,
He left the cotton field and corn.
This old man has lived out his three score and ten,
And he'll soon have to lay down and die,
Yet he hopes to go unto a better land,
So now old cabin home good bye.

Near the Banks of that Lone River.

Arr. by Wm Shay.

1. Near the banks of that lone riv - er, ... Where the wa - ter lil - ies grow,
2. Like the stream with lil - ies la - den, ... Will life's fu - ture current flow,
5th. pos.
Breath'd the fairest flower that ev - er ..... Bloomed and fa - ded years a - go;
Till in heaven I meet that maid - en, ... Fond - ly cherished years a - go;
5th. pos.
How we met and loved and part - ed, None on earth can ev - er .... know, ...
Hearts that love like mine for- get .. not, There the same in weal or ... wo, ...
Nor how pure and gentle heart - ed, ... Beamed the mourned one years a - go.
And the star of mem'ry set not, ... In the grave of years a - go.
5th pos.
Near the banks of that lone riv - er, ... Where the wa- ter lil - ies grow,
Breath'd the fairest flower that ev - er, ... Bloom'd and fa - ded years a - go.
5th. pos.

"Daffney Do You Love Me?"

Words by SAM. LUCUS. Music by HENRY HART. Arr. by WM. SHAY.

1. The wind was calm and the sun had set, Oh Daffney do you love me yet? When me and black eyed
2. Oh Daff - ney love will you be mine, Oh Daffney do you love me yet? And join me in the
3. Oh Daff - ney love we're hitch'd for life, Oh Daffney do you love me yet? And friends she is my
Daff - ney met, Oh Daffney do you love me yet? She wore a red rose on her head,
temp'rance line, Oh Daffney do you love me yet? My love and sweet one thus re - plied,
lov - ing wife, Oh Daffney do you love me yet? I've married her and I've set - tled down,
Oh Daffney do you love me yet? And to my sweet one thus I said, Oh Daffney do you love me yet?
Oh Daffney do you love me yet? To- mor row I will be your bride, Oh Daffney do you love me yet?
Oh Daffney do you love me yet? And all my friends can call around, Oh Daffney do you love me yet?
Chorus.
Oh B'ar de news, B'ar de news, B'ar de news, For I is coming, B'ar de news,
B'ar de news, Gwine to meet you bye and bye, Oh B'ar de news, B'ar de news,
B'ar de news, For I is com-ing, B'ar de news, B'ar de news, Gwine to meet you bye and bye.

THE

"VICTOR" BANJO MANUAL

BY

GEO. C. DOBSON

THE "BANJO KING."

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